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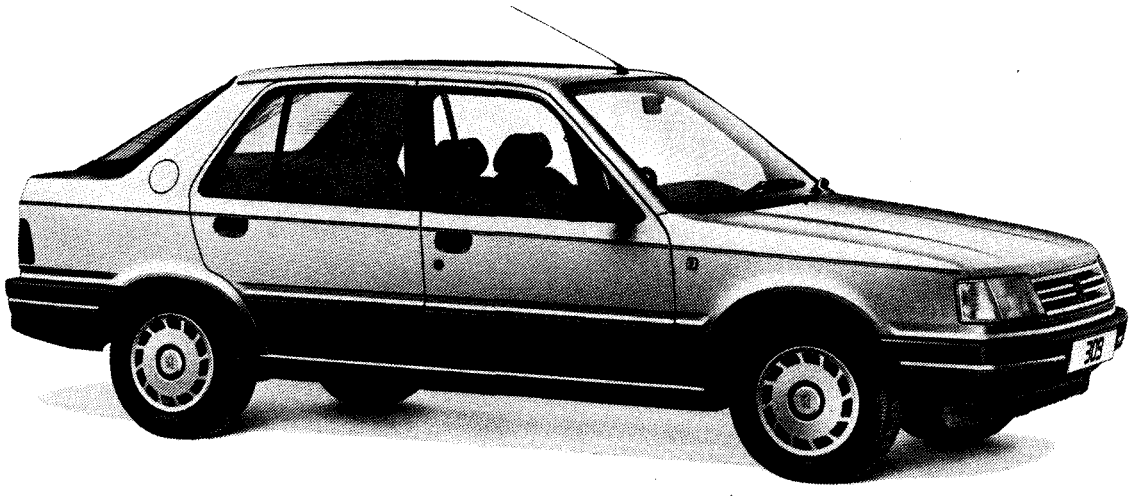

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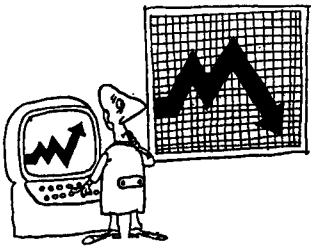
Harold James

Why We Should Learn to Love a Crisis

On Myths, Illusions, Gloom & Doom



I WANT TO ARGUE two apparently perverse proposals. First, that economic crises are intrinsic to the operation of Market (or capitalist) economies. Secondly, that this fact should not be a cause for concern. Crises in fact serve a particular, and necessary, function. The first theme is known as one of Marx's central contentions (the second, of course, is not). Marx commented on the regular upheaval in which "factories are closed, raw materials accumulate, finished products flood the market as commodities. . . ."[1] From Ricardo, Marx had taken a law of the falling rate of profit and the progressive immiseration of the working class. Eventually this would produce a gigantic social explosion; but on the way to that inevitable cataclysm, there would be many miniature versions:

> "The periodical depreciation of existing capital—one of the means immanent in the capitalist process to check the fall of the rate of profit and hasten accumulation of capital-value through formations of new capital—disturbs the given conditions, within which the process of circulation and reproduction of capital takes place, and is therefore accompanied by sudden stoppages and crises in the production process. . . ."[2]

The Marxist theory of general impoverishment and general crisis has been discredited by actual experience. None of the predicted or claimed "general crises" have in reality brought the end of capitalism. The market economy has survived, has regenerated and transformed itself, and has even won some popularity as a provider of basic human choice. Along with the discrediting of an idea of a general crisis, the belief in "partial" or "limited" crises has also become unpopular.

It is a widespread notion that economic crises can and should in a well-ordered world be avoided by a proper management on the part of judicious men equipped with adequate theory and sensible policies. If crises nevertheless occur, it is because some inept, or corrupt, or bigoted politician has deliberately or by negligence imposed a wrong course. Perhaps narrow class interest leads to an attempt to punish workers by high rates of unemployment. Perhaps a blind subservience to the interests of a foreign economy stands in the way of a rational management of the domestic economy. Perhaps the politicians just do not have enough evidence available in order to be able to make the correct decision among alternative policies.

In consequence there have been many apparently appealing theories available on how to avoid crises: central planning of the whole economy or its commanding heights; partial planning of key sectors (usually investment goods); the development of welfare programmes; or Keynesian demand-management. One difficulty that has only gradually become apparent is that many of these theories, when translated into practice, have had unintended or even catastrophic consequences.

In 1931, when the world was suffering from the most severe crisis of the industrial era, Stalin justified the historical necessity of Soviet collectivisation and forced industrialisation in the following terms:

> "Our superiority lies in the fact that we do not experience any crises of overproduction; we have not and shall not have problems of unemployment; we have no anarchy in our production because we have a planned economy."[3]

Everyone now knows what a high human cost the Five Year Plan and "dekulakisation" actually imposed on Russia. That cost was described as being a necessary jolt in order to move the Soviet economy into modernisation. However, millions of deaths through starvation—the result of what became a planned crisis—are a heavy price to pay for the creation of a system which bases its appeal on the promise to avoid crises.

From the point of view of Stalinist planning, this did not really matter. The actual reality of crisis *within* planning in the 1930s even provided a legitimation for the Stalinist terror. If problems remained despite the postulated higher efficiency of central planning, they could not conceivably be a con-

[1] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III (Moscow, 1959), p. 483.
[2] *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 249.
[3] Speech of 4 April 1931, in E. Zaleski, *Planning for Economic Growth in the Soviet Union 1918-1932* (Chapel Hill, 1971), p. 11.

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sequence of that planning. Rather, they must stem from the actions of saboteurs and wreckers opposed to planning. In that case the efficiency of the system might only be increased by the elimination of such harmful influences.

Another régime founded on the political promise of the overcoming of economic crisis was National-Socialist Germany. Large-scale unemployment discredited the governments of the Weimar Republic; and in 1932, with almost seven million Germans out of work, one of the most persuasive planks in the Nazi programme was the promise to launch "a war for work (*Arbeitsschlacht*)". Once he had become Chancellor, Hitler made a great deal of propaganda out of digging the first spadeful of earth for the new *Autobahnen*, the highways which would take Germany out of the age of mass unemployment. The miracle of the Nazi economic recovery appeared as the most attractive side of Hitlerism. He won plaudits from observers in and outside Germany who were convinced that there must be some way out of crisis. Keynes's Cambridge disciple Joan Robinson commented that "Hitler had already found how to cure unemployment before Keynes had finished explaining why it occurred. . . . It was a joke in Germany that Hitler was planning to give employment in straightening the Crooked Lake, painting the Black Forest white, and putting down linoleum in the Polish corridor."[4]

By the end of the 1930s the human costs of Nazi re-employment programmes began to be clearer. The unemployed had been made to work by forcible conscription of labour. But even the economic effects were questionable. Public deficits mounted, the economy became overheated, and fears of a new economic collapse if rearmament came to an end were at least one of the causes of the increasing belligerence of foreign policy.

LIBERALS IN the inter-War years were alarmed by the apparent fact that it was the totalitarian states which had solved the economic problem and removed crisis. Like Joan Robinson, they frequently took the boasts of Hitler and Stalin at face value and thought that a strong state had removed the demoralising and destabilising economic crises that continued to plague democracy. It was this belief that lay behind the urgency of the appeal made in John Maynard Keynes's *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), p. 381:

> "The authoritarian state systems of today seem to solve the problem of unemployment at the expense of efficiency and of freedom. It is certain that the world will not much longer tolerate the unemployment which, apart from brief intervals of excitement, is associated—and in my opinion inevitably associated—with present-day capitalistic individualism. But it may be possible by a right analysis to cure the disease whilst preserving efficiency and freedom."

Such an analysis is what Keynes set out to provide. His programme was intended as an emergency measure to save democracy. It was hopeless to expect market forces to produce an equilibrium at or near full levels of employment. Instead, in the end he concluded (p. 378) that "a somewhat comprehensive socialisation of investment will provide the only means of securing an approximation to full employment."

THE RESULTS OF HIS CURE were unexpected—and produced new problems. Keynes learnt from the inter-War slump the frighteningly clear lesson that unemployment produced crises in democracy. After the Second World War, many governments had as a major policy goal the avoidance of high levels of unemployment (often defined at staggeringly low levels: 1 or 2%). Bankruptcies, because they produce large-scale lay-offs, were believed to involve too high a social cost. So governments became involved in the heavy subsidisation of high-employment industries—coal, steel, automobile manufacture. In addition, in the quest for near-full employment, they frequently employed Keynesian-style demand-management. Fiscal policies which were intended to promote Keynes's "somewhat comprehensive socialisation of investment" led to permanent and growing public-sector deficits, to greater degrees of financial instability, and also to higher rates of inflation. By the 1970s it became apparent that high levels of inflation could coincide with—and did little to reduce—high unemployment levels. As a result, many observers drew a new lesson from the 1970s: namely, that Keynesianism was a poor way of handling problems of structural change in the economy.

Maybe the lessons of the past, and of the inter-War years, had actually been misunderstood. It is in fact rarely apparent (to historians, or to anyone else) exactly what conclusions anyone should draw from a particular experience. Indeed, there might have been quite another moral of the story of inter-War Europe.

After the First World War, the German and other Central European governments had been afraid to balance their Budgets and stabilise their currencies because they thought that this might raise unemployment, and that high levels of unemployment would be politically destabilising. They were frightened that Soviet Russia might export to them the Bolshevik Revolution. So they chose, more or less knowingly, inflation, and then hyperinflation, rather than unemployment.

Yet the post-World War I hyperinflations had consequences *at least as destabilising* and damaging to the social structure as the depressions that France, Britain, and the USA experienced in 1920 and 1921. These terrible inflations did not bring the end of attempts to manipulate the international economy in an effort to avoid sharp crises. In the second half of the 1920s, the Federal Reserve System in the USA held down interest rates and encouraged an outflow of funds to Europe and South America in the belief that any tighter monetary policy would produce economic, and then political, chaos in Europe. Among American financiers,

[4] Joan Robinson (1974), quoted in G. Garvy, "Keynes and the Economic Activists of Pre-Hitler Germany", *Journal of Political Economy* (1975), p. 403.

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there was something of a consensus that America had a duty to help the world. In 1927 Europe's Central Bankers went to Long Island to persuade the Governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York that American interest rates needed to be low in order to save Europe. Mr Benjamin Strong listened sympathetically to this advice—with quite disastrous results. His policy helped to feed the damaging speculation on Wall Street; and the loans to Europe and South America, often disastrously misapplied in public-sector makework schemes, went wrong too.

In retrospect, it looked as if a well-intentioned policy, designed to remove economic distress, had instead contributed to the severity of the international depression at the end of the 1920s.

So the post-1945 problem of policy responses which only make eventual crises worse is not a new phenomenon. At the end of the 1960s, small recessions and hiccups in growth rates, which went together with increased labour militancy and unrest, made European governments even more concerned about the unemployment problem.

A social way to deal with it was to make redundancy more difficult. In France, a succession of laws passed between 1969 and 1975 made lay-offs on economic grounds subject to administrative authorisation. Italy in 1970 introduced a "Worker's Statute" with a similar intention. After 1972, West German factory councils (*Betriebsräte*) had the right to block redundancies. Such legislation—particularly when associated with minimum-wage laws (France) or wage-indexation (Italy)—has produced a bifurcation of the labour market in which a privileged group, protected by unions, establishes a secure position which is virtually completely resistant to the costs of change, while these costs are imposed entirely on those (often other workers) who fall outside their protection. Legislation for labour security, initially intended to *minimise* the burden of adjustment in the name of greater social justice, thus turns out to be having exactly the opposite effect.

Or take another example of how laudable and well-intentioned attempts to avoid or mitigate crisis have led instead to a growing ossification or rigidification of economic structures—to the problem now labelled as "Eurosclerosis" and held to be responsible for low growth-rates and high unemployment in Europe of the 1970s and 1980s.

In the late 19th century there was alarm at the overcrowding and insanitary conditions in slum tenements built by speculative profiteering sharks. A greater supply of public (usually municipal) housing might lead to improved living, and obliterate obvious poverty. But in turn large stocks of municipal housing began to produce their own poverty traps. People were reluctant to leave cheap subsidised housing, even though living in a particular area might condemn them to lower levels of opportunity or, frequently, to long-term unemployment. Impeded mobility has imprisoned many in low-wage no-future jobs.

It may be tempting to conclude that relatively small crises, momentarily high levels of unemployment, and widespread bankruptcy are desirable simply because policies that aim to remove them seem to produce even bigger crises, from which no one is able to see any real way out. Large-scale crises inevitably produce a great deal of suffering; people become pessimistic about the future and about the viability of social and political institutions. In consequence, profound economic disturbances often produce political upheaval—as in the case of the collapse of the Weimar Republic.

On its own, however, it is scarcely an argument in favour or a justification of economic crises to say that many attempts to deal with them or with their consequences have been costly fiascos. We might ask, then, how it is possible to deal with the progressive rigidification and sclerosis produced by unsuccessful attempts to deal with past difficulties. The answer, in my view, is surprising but simple: through *crises*. Small crises are the ideal way of *avoiding* major crises. They should not necessarily be regarded as a social ill to be avoided at any price. Clearly we need crises as a purgative experience, to liquidate the mistakes of the past.

This view is perhaps familiar as the Theory of Crisis advanced by Joseph Schumpeter. The purgative function lies in the liquidation of inefficient enterprises. In crises, the least effective and the least profitable institutions feel the impact first. Their collapse frees factors—labour and capital—and provides the ground for a new recovery. There is here a sort of Darwinian theory of the survival of the economically fittest. It is implied when liberal economists and politicians speak of "the bracing wind" of free competition.

This position has an intrinsic logic. But it might well be objected that it is by no means always the old and technically or organisationally inefficient that are the early victims. Often units of this sort manage to survive in a hostile environment, while novel and innovative firms suffer, and a striking example of this can be found in inter-War Britain. The coal industry then was in a perpetually depressed condition, but large numbers of small, inefficient, high-cost producers could not be put out of business by *any* crisis.

To put this point in terms of the "bracing wind" analogy: low forms of moss manage to survive gales in which tall, or growing, or beautiful plants are blown away.

There is a better way of describing small and recurrent crises—as opportunities for a relatively painless distribution of the cost of change. This point can be illustrated by referring to a major contemporary problem: the international debt crisis.

Part of the story of economic development is the building-up of debt. Individuals, firms, and governments borrow in order to be able to build up their activities. They expect future returns to be greater than the costs of repaying the debts. Yet often this calculation turns out to be mistaken. The actual cost of borrowing may prove to be higher than the actual returns; "debt service" paid by the borrower exceeds the returns generated from the application of the borrowed funds. In this case the build-up of debt imposes a heavy

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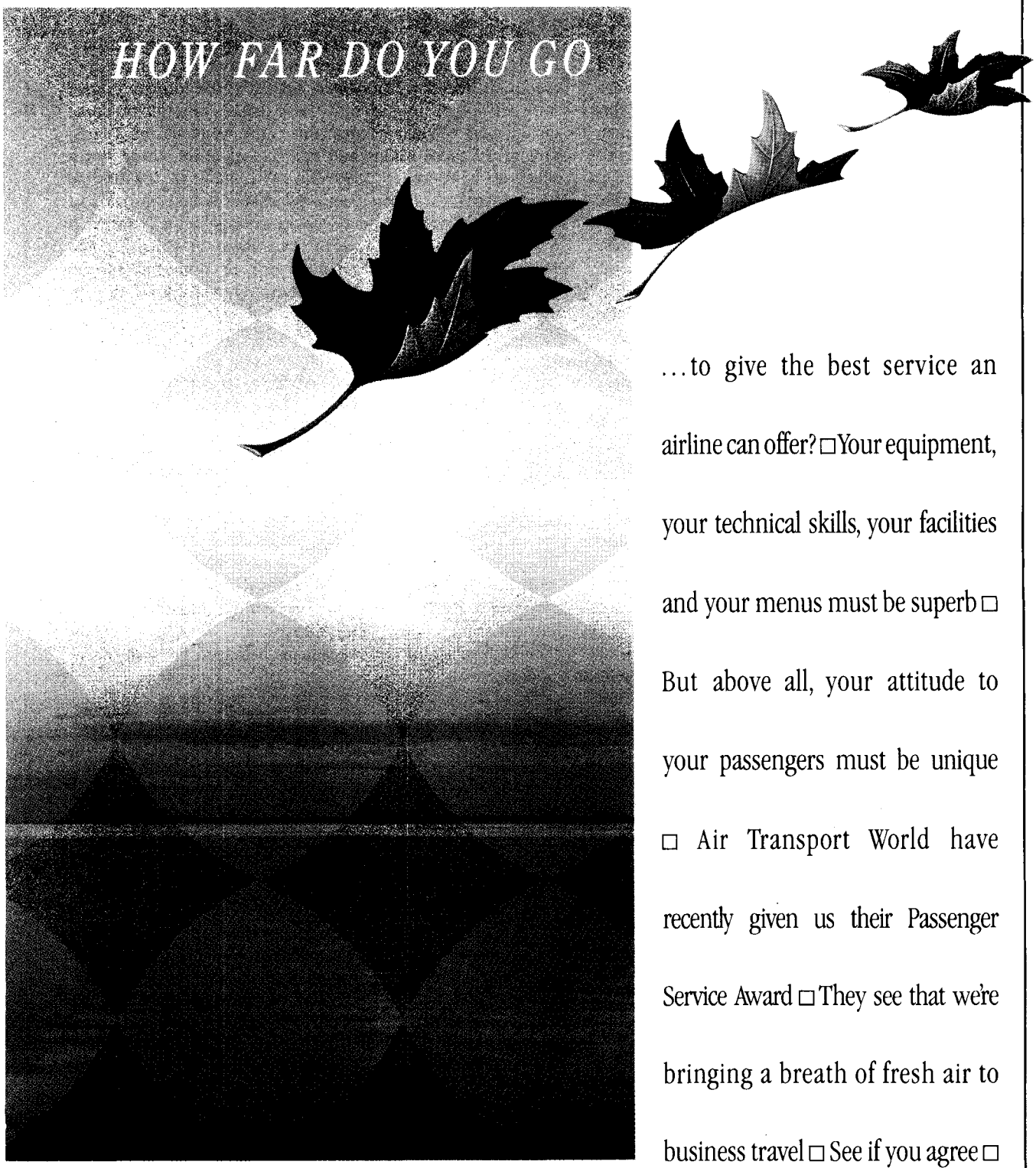

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burden, and there is then a threat of a crisis of debt-deflation. (This is what occurred in the early 1930s, when the effort of trying to repay led to a major economic collapse.) Goods are forced on to the market in order to service debts, but this pressure means dramatic price-falls; as a result the belief in high future returns proves to be mistaken, and borrowers go bankrupt.

Incidentally, this is a very old problem. It was for this reason that Judaic law provided for the year of the *jubile*, every 49 (seven times seven) years. The *jubile* (jubilee) was, as the name suggests, a joyful occasion on which a general remission of debt took place.

Often investors make wrong decisions and miscalculate the ability of the borrower to repay. We should not assume that private investors (any more than state investors!) always make wise decisions or appropriate choices. They are, after all, not conspicuously endowed with some peculiar gift that allows them uniquely to make accurate forecasts about a future that is by essence unforeseeable. One of the characteristics of an entrepreneur is adventurousness—which frequently leads to misassessments. Investors will make similar mistakes. Indeed, an essential feature of the early industrial development of the world was the frequent (and obviously involuntary) self-taxing of the investor or the rentier as a result of crisis.

In periods of vigorous economic growth there were also very high levels of bankruptcy. Such bankruptcy served a purpose in preventing the burden of debt from getting out of control: it was a kind of forced and regular jubilee. This self-regulation is much more painless when distributed evenly and thinly. Railway companies built lines all over Europe, America, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire, often with funds raised on the British or French capital markets. Frequently—in 1857, 1873, 1890—the rail companies collapsed, and the investors were ruined; but the lines were in place and could continue to be used for transportation.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING COMPARISON as a lesson in the uses of bankruptcy. Russia in the 1890s borrowed large amounts on Western capital markets. So did Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, as well as the COMECON economies (notably Poland), in the 1970s. In Czarist Russia, under the skilful management of Finance Minister Sergei Witte, foreign investment was crucial in developing the steel industry of the Ukraine and the oilfields around Baku. Initially only a few foreign investors were interested in Russia; but they made spectacular profits, often as high as 50% in a single year. Such profits of course excited a great deal of attention: from Lenin, and from subsequent Soviet writers such as P. V. Ol', who saw in these bizarrely high levels the clear demonstration of how the West was imposing its yoke on a naive and credulous Russia.[5]

But the high profit levels also attracted large numbers of French, Belgian and British investors, who poured money into projects many of which proved subsequently to be quite worthless. These were in reality the men who were naive and credulous. Russian landowners rushed to the foreign *bourses* in order to sell the rights to non-existent minerals on some distant part of their estates. After the weakness of a large number of these claims had become apparent, there was a sharp crisis. Between 1899 and 1901 many of the foreign bonds went into default, and the shares issued abroad lost most of their value. There was on average actually rather a low rate-of-return on foreign investment in Russia in the 1890s, probably lower than profits in domestic French investments. France had, involuntarily, subsidised the industrial development of Russia.

HOW DIFFERENT is the story, much better known and much more traumatic, of the 1970s. There was little initial hesitation, because international markets were flooded with loan funds. Many of the syndicated bank loans went into quite useless activities, and indeed frequently were used to finance capital flight—but this time the borrowers were sovereign states rather than the Russian gentry. For the borrowing states, the advantages were clear. By running large Budget deficits, externally financed, they might generate high growth-rates, with beneficial effects for all citizens but particularly for those who had connections and contacts with the governing élite. The states could borrow relatively cheaply because of a most peculiar belief on the part of the lenders.

These lenders believed that they were living in a risk-free world. Their nominal rates of interest were high, but were low or even occasionally negative in real terms, and were only one or two percentage points above New York or London rates. Such low rates were justified by the low level of risk of sovereign debt. Borrowers would not declare bankruptcies because a single failure would destroy the prestige of the state. The world had changed considerably since the days when Philip II could with impunity declare frequent bankruptcies of the Spanish monarchy.

Many recent books and articles make fun of the assumptions of the earnest young bankers of the 1970s about the especial sanctity of sovereign debt. But, curiously, the bankers were in fact right. The Latin American and East European states made heroic and extremely costly efforts to repay their debt. Debts were serviced regularly, even when it was very hard to raise and transfer those service charges. Argentina currently pays interest and amortisation on foreign-held debt amounting to 90% of export earnings, and Mexico pays 59%. Yet so far these problems have been contained by a combination of debt-rescheduling agreements and new loans. Often reschedulings were only requested in order to deal with a burden of repayment which, because of high nominal interest rates, falls unusually heavily in the early years of the loan period. Hungary, Mexico, and Argentina have put through harsh austerity programmes in order to curb imports and increase exports.

Almost no debtors manage to escape this kind of pressure: Poland is an almost unique case. In 1980, its debt service already exceeded its total exports, and the problem has still

[5] See, on this, J. P. McKay, *Pioneers for Profit* (Chicago, 1970); and P. V. Ol', *Inostrannye kapitaly v. Rossii* (Petrograd, 1922).

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not been solved. In 1986, $2.6 billion in interest and $3.7 billion repayments are due, although the total export earnings for 1985 amounted to only $6.2 billion. In the past, most of the repayments (and even a large proportion of the interest payments) have been dealt with by reschedulings and fresh credits, because the troubled régime is too politically vulnerable to be able to risk the workers' unrest that would be the unavoidable result of a severe deflationary squeeze. Even so, since 1983 there have been modest balance-of-trade surpluses—an indication that there has been some attempt to force exports and curb imports.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO AVOID THE CONCLUSION that Eastern Europe and Latin America were "exploited" far more effectively by Western finance capital in the 1980s than Czarist Russia in the 1890s. The existence of the concept of "the Sovereign Borrower" not only meant the massive and potentially destabilising build-up of international debt, but also that the costs of adjustment were borne for the most part by the borrowing countries. The existence of the State as Borrower ruled out the easiest, and the most equitable, way of sharing the burden of large investment programmes that had been catastrophically misconceived.

By trying to reduce risk, the international financial system had produced an outcome whereby the way in which risk was distributed became a major political theme. Every possible solution seems to impose a one-sided sacrifice, and becomes bitterly controversial. *Should the borrowers continue to pay?* In that case the austerity programmes they would need to impose might easily become politically unacceptable. *Should the borrowers refuse to pay?* In that case the international banking system would be faced with the likelihood of a collapse that would certainly endanger the industrial countries. In the 19th-century railway defaults, on the other hand, the damage was much more limited. A small handful of railway directors and a larger number of European investors paid a price that seemed, in the short term, very high. In a longer term the economic cost was small, and in addition no great political issues seemed to be raised by the distribution of risk. It would have been pointless to see those crises in terms of "North-South" dialogues, Third-World arguments or conflicts.

It is very hard to see a way out of the growing political crisis that the imposition of austerity will engender. It may be that, in the longer run, there is no possibility of some of the Latin American public borrowers repaying their loans, and that new King Philip IIs will have no alternative except to declare some form of public bankruptcy that will endanger the future credit of the borrower.

Is any optimism at all possible here? The immediate catastrophe on world financial markets would be horrifying; and no one can be in a position to predict any outcome with any degree of security. So the following crumb of comfort might not, in the end, amount to very much at all. In the aftermath of such a disastrous collapse there would be scope for raising new money for Latin America and Eastern Europe only by invididual borrowers (i.e. *not* states), who would offer marketable goods or services to provide for the amortisation and interest on the borrowed sums. The privatisation of assets, or a redistribution of risk away from the public sector, will become attractive as a way out of the debt crisis and as a way to encourage new lending.

The debt problems of today arise directly out of a fallacious assumption that risk is avoidable, and can and should be "socialised", or taken over by the state. It is an international version of the domestic story of Keynesian-style "crisis avoidance". In both cases, the system of crisis-response actually generates political problems. This is because states are tempted to take on themselves risks and burdens which they cannot, in the long run, sustain. This may well have an effect on the way in which citizens think about states: the moral authority of a state is weakened when it attempts to perform something that is, quite simply, impossible. States cannot take the risks and the uncertainties out of development. They should not try to escape small crises, and small bankruptcies, that are immeasurably less painful than large ones, and have the highly therapeutic function of distributing sacrifice more or less equitably.

Not only does the ambition of removing risk and avoiding crisis produce large-scale economic snarl-ups, often rather misleadingly described as "profound structural crises"; it also transfers the crisis into the sphere of politics. This is because it makes people conscious of choices (which can rarely be made on the basis of any rational criteria) about how unpleasant sacrifices should be allocated. One of the most attractive features of the small therapeutic crisis is that it does not raise such difficult political issues as the large traumatic crisis. Shouldn't we really be a little fonder of small crises?

Neonatal

Thick snow conceals recumbent cars under
showroom wraps. The oak-trees in the grounds show off
their sale-price minks. Wires sag towards the city
awaiting messages of joy or grief.
Sparrows pioneer patterns where paths have gone.
The whole thing's counterfeit and soundless.
In here a high-pitched blip signals something.

I emerge with a thud, rooting for the pap
and hard-faced with exhaustion. My head
is fibre-glass, shaped and left to set. Bruised, blue
and filmy, I spit into voice. My yell
protests at the light, rising and falling
like ink on graph paper. Indigo fingers
claw at the breast, their nails already long.

Adrian Blackledge

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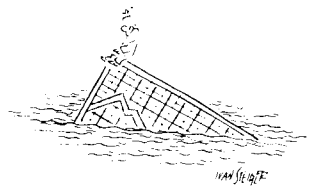
Walter Eltis

The Borrowing Fallacy

On the World Debt Crisis



MUCH OF Latin America's debt has become unfinanceable, and in addition the government debt of several Western developed countries has increased massively in the 1970s and the 1980s. Several of these are rapidly approaching a condition where drastic corrective action will be needed if they are to avoid financial destabilisation. This recent growth of government debt in Latin America, North America, and Europe can be explained in two broad ways.

First, government expenditure is often popular, and it helps governments to realise many of their promised social and political objectives. Taxation, in contrast, always weakens popularity and reduces political support. Politically weak governments are therefore tempted to buy short-term popularity by raising public expenditure through borrowing—it allows them to reward their supporters and fulfil their objectives more rapidly. This borrowing will involve significant costs in due course; but a different group of politicians will often have to face the unpopularity involved in paying the interest, often to foreign countries, on debt which financed originally popular expenditures. A disregard for the eventual cost of policies which are popular in the short term is a feature of the politics of many countries.[1]

But this has always been a feature of the politics of democracy, for electorates are widely believed to have very short memories so that there are overwhelming pressures on politicians to spend more and to tax less as elections approach. And authoritarian governments are also often under overwhelming pressure to boost their popularity, or at any rate to reward the supporters of the régime.

So why is it that government debt has grown so overwhelmingly in the 1970s and the 1980s, when this pattern of causation has always been present?

An important explanation of why 19th- and early 20th-century governments often resisted the political pressure to borrow is that electorates then believed that this was incorrect economics, with the result that deficit financing was not the political asset it subsequently became. Britain ran enormous Budget deficits in the great wars of 1793-1815 and 1914-18, for the need to borrow heavily to finance international conflict has always been accepted. But the economics of Adam Smith took over immediately peace was declared, and public debt fell year after year in relation to the national income. Disraeli was castigated by Gladstone for the expedients he resorted to to balance the British Budget of 1852, and his Budget proposals were defeated in the House of Commons. Ramsay MacDonald's Labour government ran a modest deficit of £120 million in the 1931 world slump (just over 3% of the national income), but the May Committee advised that the Budget be balanced via reductions in unemployment benefits and only half the Labour Cabinet was prepared to support this. King George V urged Ramsay MacDonald to form a National Government in order to balance the Budget, and those members of the Parliamentary Labour Party who believed in deficit financing won only 60 seats at the subsequent general election. So far from being an election asset, *peacetime* deficit financing was actually a recipe for electoral catastrophe less than 60 years ago.

Part of the explanation of the growing debt of many Western countries since the Second World War is that the Keynesian Revolution reversed orthodox economists' analyses of the desirability of deficit financing. Electorates—which had previously regarded peacetime government borrowing as a politically disreputable expedient which only weak governments resorted to—were gradually educated to believe that deficit financing was *correct* economics whenever domestic demand was deficient.

KEYNES'S SOLUTION to the unemployment problem of the inter-War years involved the generation of sufficient effective demand to sustain full employment. He argued that if the private sector failed to spend enough, it then became incumbent on the state to spend what the private sector would not. He accepted that most of this additional government expenditure would need to be financed by borrowing.

Keynes did not envisage that government borrowing would be necessary all the time to sustain full employment; for he believed Budgets should be balanced over a period of years. This optimism is reflected in the celebrated *White Paper on Employment Policy* after the Second World War which the British government published in 1944:

> ". . . to the extent that the policies proposed in this paper affect the balancing of the Budget in a particular year, they

[1] This line of argument is developed in James M. Buchanan and Richard E. Wagner, *Democracy in Deficit* (Academic Press, New York, 1977).

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certainly do not contemplate any departure from the principle that the Budget must be balanced over a longer period."

Others—including the distinguished US economist, Evsey Domar—were less optimistic, and posed the question: Can Keynesian policies be used to sustain *continuous full employment* if that would entail *indefinite government borrowing*?

> "The theory of the multiplier and our actual experience during this war have demonstrated, I believe, that money income can be raised to any desired level if the volume of public expenditure is sufficiently high. This view will be accepted also by the opponents of deficit financing. Their objections to such a policy are based on several grounds, the most important being the belief that continuous government borrowing results in an ever-rising public debt, the servicing of which will require higher and higher taxes; and that the latter will eventually destroy our economy, or cause an outright repudiation of debt."[2]

Evsey Domar addressed himself to the question: if the United States runs a deficit for ever, what will happen? He arrived at the classic answer that the ratio *Debt/Gross National Product* converges on and will eventually equal the ratio *Deficit/GNP* divided by the economy's long-term rate of growth. Thus if a Budget deficit which is sustained over an indefinite period is divided by the rate of growth, the result is the eventual ratio of the national debt to the national income.

An example to illustrate the conclusion which Domar himself derived from this formula is set out in the accompanying table. This compares the long-term influence of deficits of 0%, 3%, 6%, and 9% of GNP. Domar believed that US growth had averaged 3% over quite long periods, so he took a 3% growth rate for granted. If borrowing ratios of 0%, 3%, 6%, and 9% are divided by a growth rate of 3%, the ratios of government debt to the national income of 0, 1, 2, and 3 shown in the table are arrived at. Domar also assumed that the *real* rate of interest (that is, the nominal rate less the rate of inflation) is merely 2%, with the result that *Interest/GNP*, which equals *Debt/GNP* times the rate of interest is 2% where the deficit is 3%; 4% where the deficit is 6%; and 6% where the deficit is 9%.

With these assumptions, deficit financing involves no long-term cost.

If government spending is increased or taxes reduced by 9% of the national income in order to sustain full employment (or else to buy popularity), then after an indefinite number of years taxes have to be raised by 6% of the national income to pay the interest on this continuous government borrowing of 9%. So the government never has to raise taxes by as much as it cut them (or raised expenditure) in the first instance. Domar was able to conclude:

> "It is hoped that this paper has shown that the problem of the debt burden is essentially a problem of achieving a growing national income. A rising income is of course desired on general grounds, but in addition to its many other advantages it also solves the most important aspects of the problem of debt."

Domar's analysis became part of the Keynesian conventional wisdom. For several decades the vast majority of Western economists believed that there were no significant long-term problems if sovereign governments achieved full employment through *permanent* deficit-financed expenditures: the taxes required to pay the interest would never catch up with the expenditures. This view pervaded the economics textbooks through which the economically literate were educated; and the economics profession itself devoted extremely little attention in the 1950s and '60s to the long-term "burden" of public debt. This was seen as a *non-problem* because, as the sophisticated were aware, Domar had elegantly disposed of it.

Domar's Optimism about the Long-Term Cost of Public Debt

Deficit/ GNP	*Rate of Growth*	*Debt/ GNP*	*Interest Rate*	*Interest/ GNP*
0%	3%	0	2%	0
3%	3%	1	2%	2%
6%	3%	2	2%	4%
9%	3%	3	2%	6%

Table 1

The flaw in the table is the assumption that the real rate of interest is always 2%, and that it will remain the same, however much governments borrow. For it is this that prevents the interest cost of debt from exploding. But in 1974 Milton Friedman wrote:

> "We have interest rate data over very long periods of time, and these indicate that rates are very similar at distant times, if the times compared have similar price behaviour. More recently, the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis has been estimating the 'real rate', and their estimates are remarkably stable despite very large changes in nominal rates."[3]

So it wasn't just Domar who assumed that the interest rate would remain the same, however much governments borrowed, which led to the happy conclusion that governments will never have to pay back as high a share of the national income as they borrow. This rests on the crucial assumption that the real rate of interest is less than the rate of growth. However, most Western governments now have to pay real interest rates of 4%, 5%, or even more, while their real rates-of-growth have been only 2 or 3%.

It is evident, therefore, that the assumptions set out in the table are absurdly optimistic. How will extra borrowing

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[2] Evsey Domar, "The 'Burden of the Debt' and the National Income", in *American Economic Review* (Vol. 34, December 1944).

[3] Milton Friedman et al., *Milton Friedman's Monetary Framework: A Debate with his Critics* (University of Chicago Press, 1974).

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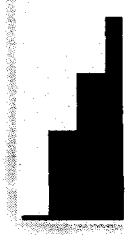

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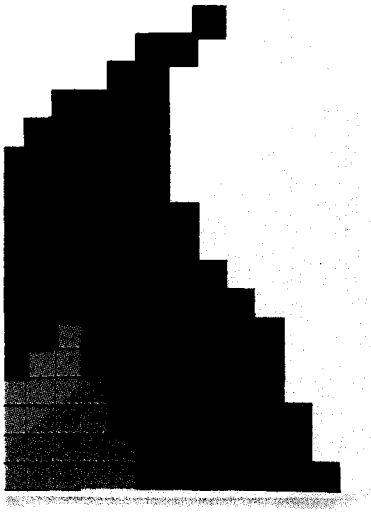

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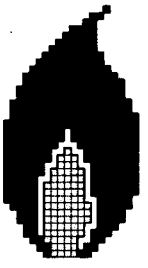

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actually influence the real rate of interest? If it raises it, then the results set out in the table will need to be modified.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF countries in the world today with entirely free capital movements. The USA, West Germany, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland are obvious examples. Money can be borrowed in any one of these and spent in others, so they form an international capital market.

Any increase in the demand for finance from anywhere in the world will *raise* interest rates in this unified capital market, while any increase in the funds available will *lower* world interest rates. The total supply of finance in this world capital market is the total saving of all the countries—while the demand for finance is their total investment, plus the demand for finance from countries outside the group who seek to borrow in New York, Frankfurt, or London. So a rise in world saving relative to investment will increase the total funds available and so allow long-term interest rates to fall; a substantial increase in investment in the world as a whole will raise world interest rates.

Government borrowing also has to be financed in the world's financial markets, so this has to compete with private investment for the finance available. If the aggregate saving that finds its way to the world's capital markets and aggregate private-investment demand are unchanged, but governments seek to borrow more, then world interest rates will be bid upwards. Governments will only obtain the extra finance they need by paying sufficient interest to attract more saving to world capital markets; or else by "crowding out" private investment, because projects will be less capital-intensive the higher the rate of interest.[4]

KEYNESIANS OBJECT TO this approach to the influence of deficits upon world interest rates. They believe the extra world demand that extra government deficits generate will raise world output and therefore aggregate world saving. If the world's budget deficits rise by $100 billion and aggregate world saving also rises by $100 billion (because of the expansion these deficits induce), then the demand for finance and the supply in the world as a whole will rise equally; so there will be no need for world interest rates to rise. Keynesians, therefore, argue that deficits will only raise real interest rates if there is full employment in the world as a whole.

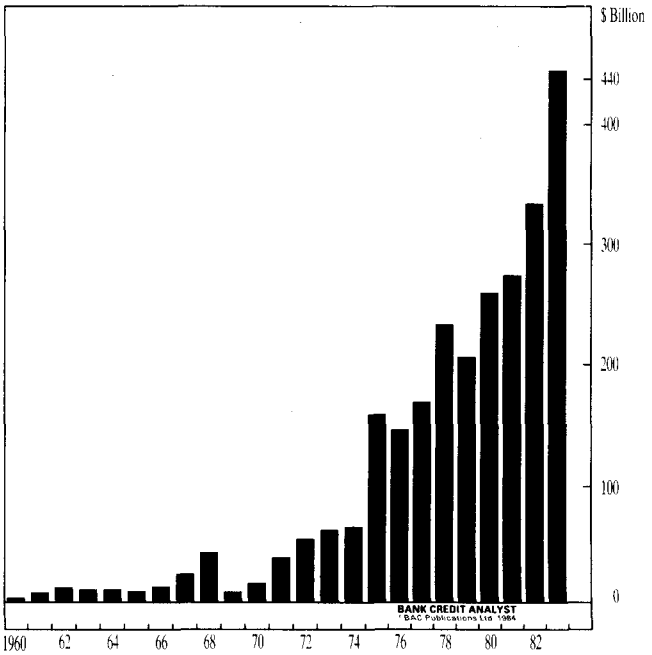
In reality, there will always be some sectors of the world economy which are close to capacity limits, so any extra demand that results from deficit financing will fail to raise supply in at least part of the world. Hence, while global deficit financing may often raise saving to some extent, it will also raise world interest rates because supply will not be sufficiently elastic to allow all the saving required to come forth at an unchanged rate of interest. So deficits will *always* raise real interest rates; and the larger are overall world deficits, the more interests rates will rise.

The diagram below shows how markedly the aggregate deficits of the largest eleven Western economies have risen in the 1970s and the 1980s—so it is no wonder that real interest rates have risen so sharply. The increasing borrowing by developing and Latin American and COMECON economies from the pool of saving of the Western developed economies has naturally added to the upward pressure on world interest rates. But the aggregate deficits of *the developed economies* themselves have been far greater than Third World borrowing, and this has been especially the case in 1983, 1984, and 1985 when the US deficit of over $200 billion has amounted to *between one-third and one-half of total world borrowing by governments*. In 1984, the total US government debt outstanding was approximately $1,400 billion—while Latin American governments owed around $330 billion, South-east Asian governments $130 billion, African and Middle Eastern governments $150 billion, and COMECON governments perhaps $70 billion. US government debt, therefore, amounted to about twice the total debt of all these governments.[5]

Latin America borrowed these huge sums ostensibly to finance "economic development". But that is not where a good deal of the money actually went.

In Argentina successive governments borrowed $50 billion, which could have enabled $50 billion of extra capital equipment and vital raw materials to be imported in order to expand industry and commerce. As soon as the facts are examined, however, it emerges that the current account of the Argentinian balance of payments has been in overall

Aggregate Budget Deficit
(estimate of 11 major countries)



Includes Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, UK, US (including Federal Agency debt).

[4] This line of argument is developed in, for instance, Martin Feldstein, "Fiscal Policies, Inflation and Capital Formation", *American Economic Review* (vol. 70, September 1980).

[5] These statistics are derived from *The Bank Credit Analyst* (November 1984).

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deficit by only $15 billion since 1970, so foreign borrowing financed extra imports of only $15 billion. The remaining $35 billion that Argentinian governments borrowed removed balance-of-payments constraints for a few years—and this enabled wealthy Argentinian families to get $35 billion of their personal assets out of the country.

The result today is that the Argentinian State has accumulated $50 billion of international debt (with a present value of perhaps $10 billion to the banks which misguidedly lent the money), while private Argentinian familes have acquired $35 billion of excellent foreign assets (in US and Swiss banks, and in share portfolios) which must be worth at least $50 billion today after the recent rises in the world's stock exchanges.

In other Latin American and Asian countries, a good deal of the money the State borrowed has also found its way to its political supporters and to the friends and relatives of those with the vast financial opportunities open to the families which can influence governments.

Some years ago Keith Griffin and John Enos showed that *there is no correlation between the extra finance that foreign aid makes available to developing countries and their subsequent investment and growth.*[6] On balance, they showed, the extra financial resources which the world made available to the governments of developing countries added little to total investment (though there was some substitution of projects which donors supported for the investments which would otherwise have been undertaken). In contrast, additional international finance very clearly raised consumption and (it can be conjectured) especially that of the political supporters of the fortunate governments which obtained it.

THERE HAVE, naturally, been governments which actually invested a good deal of the money they borrowed in the 1970s and the early 1980s (for instance, Mexico). The profitability of such investments has been drastically affected by the recent collapse in the oil price, and it is universally agreed that the financial return from what was borrowed from Western banks by Latin American and Asian governments will not even begin to service the interest on outstanding loans.

It must be remembered, however, that the bulk of the vast increase in government borrowing which has so raised world real interest rates has not gone to the world's poorer countries. Approximately half of total world government borrowing has recently been by the USA. Americans borrowed these vast sums because President Reagan was convinced of the overriding need to reverse the cuts in defence spending of previous administrations, and to reduce taxes in order to achieve the benefits that "supply-side economics" offered. In 1980-84, the US government raised real defence spending 37% and total Federal spending 19%; and it cut taxes substantially at the same time. Despite a remarkable growth performance (nearly in line with the predictions of Washington's "supply-siders"), these simultaneous boosts to expenditure and reductions in taxation have raised the Federal budget deficit to 5½% of the national income and the structural deficit to perhaps 4%. And today perhaps half of this structural deficit actually consists of debt interest, and a great deal of this is interest on the $1,000 billion that the Reagan Administration has itself borrowed. To quite a considerable extent therefore, it has been the rise in debt interest itself that has raised US and therefore world government borrowing to the present extraordinary levels.

THESE INTEREST COSTS rose so steeply because extra borrowing raises real interest rates throughout the world—which greatly surprised some of Washington's leading "supply-siders". Like Evsey Domar and Milton Friedman, they too had believed that real interest rates would not deviate significantly from the levels experienced over most of the 20th century. But the overall level of government borrowing in the early 1980s was unprecedented in peacetime; and it is widely understood today that if governments increase borrowing to this extent on a world scale, then real interest rates have to rise to equate the world-wide demand for saving to the total funds available.

Since the US government has been responsible for up to one-half of global government borrowing and outstanding world debt, it has also exercised the dominant influence on world interest rates. When the US government borrows more, all countries have to pay more for money. But so far world interest rates have been spoken of as if there is a single interest rate, when each country actually pays a different rate for the money its government borrows.

Countries with credit-worthiness as high as the USA's will pay what is in effect the US rate of interest, which is dominated by the level of world (and especially US) borrowing. Countries where there is judged to be a risk of default will have to pay higher dollar rates than the US, and higher interest rates in their own currencies to reflect the rate at which their exchange rate is expected to fall against the dollar.

Thus, the Brazilian, Mexican, and Argentinian governments pay dollar interest rates that exceed those the US government pays because there is a significant risk that they will default or, more probably, ask for a continual rescheduling of repayments which comes close to default. The British government now pays a sterling rate of interest that exceeds the dollar rate the US government pays by between 1% and 2% per annum because the pound is expected to fall against the dollar by between 1% and 2% per annum over the next ten to twenty years.

The Swiss and West German governments, conversely, pay about 2½% less than the US government because the Swiss franc and the Deutschmark are expected to rise against the dollar.

As an individual government raises its borrowings, it will, for two reasons, raise the rate of interest it has to pay. It will

[6] K. B. Griffin and J. L. Enos, "Foreign Assistance; Objectives and Consequences", *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (vol. 18, April 1970).

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raise it, first, because its borrowing adds to total world borrowing—and this raises the interest rates all countries have to pay. But this is only significant in the case of the United States, since other countries have an insignificant individual influence on aggregate world borrowing and saving.

Secondly, as each country raises its borrowing, it increases the risk that it will default or seek to reschedule its debts, or that its future inflation rate will rise—with the result that its exchange rate will fall in relation to the United States. These will all raise the interest rate its government has to pay in relation to US rates. It is a general proposition of "portfolio theory" that investors are less attracted to an asset the greater the relative amount of it that has to be disposed of; and extra government borrowing will always increase the relative quantity of an individual country's debt. Consequently, this will reduce its desirability as a portfolio asset, and therefore raise the interest rate the government has to pay.

THE GENERAL CONCLUSION—that governments have to pay a higher rate of interest, the more they borrow—devastates Domar's optimism. The table is recalculated below, on the assumption that each percentage point increase in a country's "Deficit/GNP" ratio raises the rate of interest its government has to pay by one third of 1%. That assumes a relatively modest linkage between extra government borrowing and the rate of interest; but it entirely alters Domar's conclusions.

Here raising the deficit by 3%—from, say, 3% to 6% of the national income—means that taxation eventually needs to be increased by 5%—from 3% to 8% of the national income—to pay additional debt-interest. Deficits, therefore, no longer offer a free lunch.

In this instance a 3% increase in the deficit allows the government to raise spending or to cut taxes by 3% of the national income. But it has to raise taxation or cut public expenditure by 5% of the national income at some point in the future to finance the 5% increase in debt interest.

Thus, if a government fulfils immediate political objectives by borrowing, a future government will have to impose larger sacrifices.

This conflict between present social and political benefits and future costs will arise wherever the real rate of interest exceeds the rate of growth.[7] If the rate of interest exceeds the rate of growth—as it does (in the second table) at all borrowing ratios in excess of 3% of the national income—then more has to be paid in the future (as a share of the national income), in the form of additional debt interest, than the extra that is borrowed in the first instance.

It was because Evsey Domar assumed a rate of interest of only 2%—which was less than the 3% growth rate which he took for granted—that he got his comfortable result. The moment the real rate of interest the government has to pay *exceeds* the long-term rate of growth—as it has for almost all governments since 1981—a higher share of the national income will need to be sacrificed in the future for anything extra that is borrowed in the present.

Additional Government Borrowing Raises Interest Rates

Deficit/ GNP	*Growth Rate*	*Debt/ GNP*	*Interest Rate*	*Interest/ GNP*
0%	3%	0	2%	0
1½%	3%	½	2½%	1¼%
3%	3%	1	3%	3%
4½%	3%	1½	3½%	5¼%
6%	3%	2	4%	8%
7½%	3%	2½	4½%	11¼%
9%	3%	3	5%	15%

Table 2

IT HAS BEEN SUPPOSED so far that governments actually raise taxation, or cut expenditure, in order to pay growing debt interest. But recent experience has shown that they frequently fail to do this. Governments commonly seek to add debt interest to their borrowing. They aim to raise public expenditure or cut taxation in the first instance, and then to borrow this fraction of the national income *plus the accumulating interest on what they borrowed initially*. In 1981 it was shown by two distinguished American economists that wherever the rate of interest exceeds the rate of growth, the procedure of adding accumulating interest to what is borrowed initially must lead to an explosive and unlimited growth of debt, with the inevitable consequence of eventual repudiation, or else monetisation leading to hyperinflation.[8]

When a government reaches the limits of its power to borrow—as it inevitably will if it seeks to borrow accumulating debt interest when the interest rate exceeds the growth rate—it will be faced with the unattractive choice of repudiation or monetisation. If the debt is denominated in foreign currency, there is no choice—because the government cannot print foreign money. If it cannot finance debt denominated in foreign currency, it has no alternative but to seek to renegotiate, and in the last resort to repudiate, its debt.

The penalty for repudiation is that several generations may elapse before international finance again becomes available. Foreign governments and banks can be defrauded once; but after that decades may go by before they cease to regard promises from that country as worthless—so they will only make goods and capital available when these are paid for *in advance* and in hard currency. It is a considerable inconvenience for countries to be in a situation where commercial borrowing is impossible; and it is undignified for the people of a country to be governed by those whose signature is worthless. Countries and governments suffer these indignities and inconveniences from time to time, but the condition is unfortunate. Governments will not pursue

[7] Where a government borrows from and pays interest to its own citizens, it will levy tax on that interest, so the relevant interest rate in this calculation is the rate of interest it pays *less* the tax it claws back. Where it borrows from foreign governments or banks, it cannot recover tax in this way. So it is the *gross* rate of interest that will need to be compared with the future rate of growth.

[8] Thomas J. Sargent and Neil Wallace, "Some Unpleasant Monetarist Arithmetic", *Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Quarterly Review* (Fall 1981).

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policies which inevitably involve default. They may, however, blunder into this situation rather easily if real interest rates exceed growth rates as they have in most of the world in the 1980s.

Governments that borrow in their own currency have the alternative option of printing money to pay the interest on previous borrowing. This will inevitably lead to hyper-inflation if borrowing rises all the time because the real rate of interest exceeds the rate of growth. The sums which will need to be printed will rise exponentially. A consequence will be that the real value of monetary wealth, including all previous government debt, will be destroyed; and there will be subsequent unwillingness to hold money printed by that government. It will take decades before such a government will be able to borrow significant sums again, in its own money or any other. Thus the procedure of adding accumulating interest to what is borrowed will again lead to financial disaster wherever the real rate of interest exceeds the growth rate. Governments will hardly embark on this if they foresee the consequences—but the debt of many Western economies *is* none the less growing at considerable rates.

One expert, John Bispham of the Bank of International Settlements, presented a comprehensive account of the borrowing trends of Western developed economies at a recent conference on public debt, and his most recent statistics include the data in Table 3.[9] This shows that Belgium, Italy, and Ireland already have ratios of government debt to the national income of over 100%, and their debt is continuing to grow rapidly.

Several other countries have more modest ratios, but these will rise towards 100% and beyond with present deficits, real interest rates, and growth rates. Thus The Netherlands, Canada and the USA have quite substantial deficits, and interest rates that are higher than their rates of growth. No corrective action to reduce the US deficit has as yet been taken (though some has been promised); and by 1986 United States public debt has risen considerably above the 29% of the national income ratio shown in the table. Debt to national income ratios are also continuing to rise rapidly in The Netherlands and Canada.

Deficits and Debt in Several Western Countries in 1985

Country	*Deficit/ GNP*	*Debt/ GNP*	*Interest Rate minus Growth Rate*	*Years before Debt/GNP reaches 100%*
Belgium	9.8%	110.5%	1.3%	already 100%
W. Germany	1.1%	23.1%	0.3%	over 400
France	3.4%	17.4%	1.0%	30
UK	3.6%	49.9%	−0.7%	199
Italy	14.1%	104.2%	2.6%	already 100%
Netherlands	5.3%	67.4%	0.7%	45
Sweden	3.2%	17.7%	0.3%	32
Ireland	12.6%	107.5%	2.1%	already 100%
Denmark	2.7%	38.8%	0.9%	35
Japan	1.6%	27.5%	−1.4%	never
Canada	6.7%	36.9%	0.7%	14
USA	3.7%	29.1%	1.7%	25

Table 3

Nominal interest rates have fallen by several percentage points since 1985, but so have inflation rates; and real interest rates still exceed the rate of growth in most Western countries. Bispham has calculated that even if growth rises to 3% and real interest rates fall to 2%, the escalating cost of *existing* borrowing will raise the ratio of government debt to the national income to more than 100% in seven Western economies. Though growth may actually rise to 3% in many countries, there is, of course, virtually no possibility that real interest rates will fall to 2%.

Western economies will, therefore, find that the interest burden of growing public debt will raise increasingly difficult problems. Britain is a rare exception, as the British economy is one of the few where the debt to national income ratio has been stable in recent years, and the latest data show that the 1985-86 fiscal deficit has unexpectedly fallen to 1.6% of the national income (which is considerably below the 1985 ratio of 3.6% shown in the table). But, at almost 50%, Britain's ratio of public debt to national income is one of the higher ones, and the adoption of substantially looser fiscal policies could rapidly produce the same difficulties for Britain as others are experiencing.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that there are many Latin American, Third World, and COMECON countries with public debt problems which are even more intractable than those of the hardest pressed Western economies. Their difficulties are, partly, a consequence of attempts to realise short-term political and economic gains via expenditure plans which have proved unfinanceable. There has also been the intellectual error stemming from the "Borrowing Fallacy" that growth rates always exceed interest rates.

The recent rise in real interest to rates far above economic growth in most of the world has exposed an intellectual error in the Keynesian analysis that dominated the 1950s and the 1960s. This made too strong a case for government borrowing by taking it for granted that growth rates would normally exceed real interest rates. That fallacy tempted many countries towards unsustainable deficits which are now producing unfinanceable public debt. For many countries the political costs now far exceed the benefits which governments derived when they spent so ambitiously a few years ago. Correcting these deficits is painful.

Examples abound of the dreadful social and political costs that are being paid today for the extravagant borrowing of governments in the 1960s and the 1970s. Latin America has

[9] J. A. Bispham, "Rising Public Sector Indebtedness: Some More Unpleasant Arithmetic", in M. Boskin, J. S. Flemming and S. Gorini (eds), *Private Saving and Public Debt* (to be published in 1987 by Basil Blackwell). The data in the table are derived from his (less comprehensive) "Growing Public Sector Debt: A Growing Policy Dilemma" in *National Westminster Quarterly Bank Review* (May 1986). Bispham assumes that the net-of-tax cost of the interest that governments pay is always three-quarters the rate of interest on long-term government bonds (except for Italy where the interest paid on government bonds is free of tax).

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had to cut imports by no less than 42% in the last four years. Mexico has reduced imports by 55%, Argentina by 43%, Venezuela by 40%, and Brazil by 24%. Real wages have fallen by 30% in Mexico and 23% in Brazil.[10] And this is merely paying the interest on what was borrowed. The debts remain.

The Western banks which advanced vast sums to Latin America and Asia should have been using a proportion of their profits to write off some of the debt which they will never recover. The British banks certainly have, and it is to be hoped (but in some cases doubted) that the leading US banks have been equally prudent. The extra growth of the world economy which should in due course follow the collapse of the oil price will also ease these problems, at least for those banks which are not especially involved with the oil producers.

In the end, the principal sufferers from the intellectual errors that caused the debt explosion of the 1970s and '80s will be the populations of the countries with unfinanceable public debt.

[10] These statistics are derived from Christopher Allsopp and Vijay Joshi, "The International Debt Crisis", *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* (Vol. 2, Spring 1986).

"Complications"

My mother was a corpse before she died:
unrecognisable, almost, ashen.
I held her hand in silence, uncertain

if she knew who I was, even,
or if she could understand anything
that I might say, though what could I say?

How I'd fought for these few stillborn minutes
at the hospital bedside,
for the unforgettably grey "Goodbye"?

"I haven't laughed so much in years.
Everyone is very kind, and tells you
exactly what's going to happen.

Pa will be staying, so he can have meals.
Soon we'll both be fighting fit.
Cheerio. God bless."

The irony of her unselfish letters
can still call forth my tears.

There were no friends of my mother at her funeral:
they had not been invited.
Plenty of my father's relatives, though.

Still, it was a Christian cremation, simple
as the rain. I later heard
a psychiatrist had ordered my father

to inject me with his pet drug, largactil,
"should it prove necessary". Happily, it did not.
But when was he to have lifted the skirts of his daughter?

During the ceremony, in the chapel of memory?
Or afterwards, in good form as he joked over the flowers?
At my father's funeral, I had no tears left to cry.

Except when I greeted the Rabbi.
Since in the same way, oddly, as it does from the Pope:
the sun streamed from his face.

Julie Whitby

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David Holden

The Onion Grass Season

"Too cruel to some is the rushing shriek of Being—
they cannot stand the world."
M. P. Shiel, THE HOUSE OF SOUNDS

WHITNEY GREY TURNER WAS absolutely furious with his wife, who had died the day before. He sat on the edge of the bed they had shared for forty-six years and lit a cigarette. It was his first in five years.

It amazed him how quickly all his old smoking habits returned—the two quick taps on the bottom of the pack to coax out the first cigarette, the rolling motion between the fingers to check for defects, the bull's-eye stab to the centre of the mouth which preceded lighting up. He huddled over and around the cigarette. Even though he was indoors he cupped the lit match in his hands. The flame leaped up angrily, flagged, then went out. He lit another and brought it to the tip. The smoke seeped between the gaps in his teeth and twined itself around his tonsils. He swallowed and shuddered slightly. He shook out the match and stared hostilely at her side of the bed.

("Emphysema", he told her when he got back from the hospital. "Doctor says quit smoking starting today if I want to see tomorrow." He hung up his coat. She nodded slowly, deliberately, shaking off the unthinkable. "We'll stop today, Whit", she said, taking his arm in hers and stroking the deep veiny valleys between his knuckles with her smooth white fingers. "We'll stop today.")

He exhaled the smoke with a snort. Damn Camilla, she was always like that. Damn his dead wife. You know she never smoked a day in her life. Hardly ever took a drink either, except maybe holidays and the odd social occasion. But that day he had come home from the hospital there she was, all ready to take the blame for it. All ready to share his penance. Damn his dead wife! *His* emphysema, *his* clogged lungs, *his* going cold turkey, *his* last few years tarnished when they should be golden, and she had wanted to share it! He remembered wanting to line up a whole pack of cigarettes between his lips, light them all at once and inhale himself to death. After all he was seventy-five then; he was not going to see his life out a cripple. But Camilla, goddam Camilla who wouldn't know which end to light, had taken his arm and said, "We'll stop today." And they had. And now yesterday she'd stopped everything else.

He smoked fiercely, puffing two, three, four times before he exhaled. The smoke belched from his nose and mouth like dark smog, wreathing him in angry pollution. From within the cigarette flicked up and down in a pistoning motion.

("He liked the X-rays", he said, hanging up his coat. He watched the deep wrinkles in her face subside into the much lighter and more agreeable ones of age. He smoothed the more stubborn with his thumb and whisked away a small tear cowering in the corner of her eye. "He says of course the emphysema's no better than when I was smoking, but in the six months since I quit there's been no increase." "That's very, very good, Whit", she said evenly. She managed a smile and told him his favourite dinner was in the oven.)

THE CIGARETTE was almost finished. He picked it out of his mouth and held it between his thumb and forefinger. When they first met he always held his cigarette that way. But he stopped when Camilla said she didn't like it. Said it made him look unsavoury, as if he should be leaning up against a sweaty lamp-post in a red-light district. He preferred to think it made him look heroic, like one of the GIs in those old combat movies. Snatching the last drag between thumb and finger before taking that hill. For a second the bedroom vanished and he was in the trenches—joking nervously with the boys, wondering what was on the other side, blowing smoke-rings into the battle-weary air. Then somebody gave a signal. Half-smoked butts went arcing across the front, and he was left behind again. He got up stiffly and stared at the bed. He felt his anger detonating in him. God *damn* his dead wife! What right did she have to go off to the other side now, now when he really needed her, now when he could finally do as he liked? How dare she! He stabbed the cigarette out savagely in the sheets on her side of the bed. It left a dark smouldering gash. Wisps of smoke, tainted with the springtime scent of the fabric softener Camilla used in the laundry, rose to his nostrils. He put his fists to his temples and went out of the room.

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QUIET. QUIET. Quiet. He hadn't heard so much quiet in all his life. It was much louder than the quiet of the library fifty years ago where he studied for his bar exams. It was far more clamorous than the quiet forty-five years ago when the doctor padded out of the hospital room to tell him he was very sorry but the baby was not born alive. More thunderous than the quiet which had roared through his brain as he stood there, inanely wondering why the doctor had said "not born alive" instead of "born dead". More deafening than the quiet which hung over their bed for two years, until Camilla finally allowed him to try again to make a family. This quiet now was the sum total of all that quiet plus more: the pallor of death, the calmness of resting, the dust-gathering of inactivity. The Horse Latitudes of a widower's life. It was insidious and addictive: it drew him into it, made him lean attentively forward in his chair, creep around the house softly and stealthily so as not to disturb it. He stopped often on his rounds, listening keenly for the sound of Camilla in the kitchen or his own voice bellowing from the bedroom about the whereabouts of his brown socks. He would just about hear them, be that first decibel away from breaking the quiet down with a response, his own voice a potential strident horn in the morgue-like Jericho of his house—then his common sense would come to the rescue. "You're imagining things", it would say, "come on, get a grip on yourself." And being a lawyer, a man of practical outlook, he would, and sit back down and light a cigarette.

"COME ON, DAD. I know how you feel, but you've got to come to the funeral." His son, the successful product of that attempt forty-three years ago, looked strained.

"No."

"You're making this hard on all of us."

"I don't care."

His son didn't respond, just looked disgustedly away as his father reached for another cigarette. Charles Hodgson Turner got out of his chair with a grunt, the kind of grunt his father would never admit to. A grunt signalling that age was starting to call in all bets. Charles wandered over to the window. He moved with the same gait he used whenever the arbitration talks he mediated for a living broke down: a stoop-shouldered loping shuffle, hands jammed in pockets, designed to illustrate both the strain he was being put under and his dogged perseverance. He sighed.

He watched his father, reflected in the window glass and unaware of his scrutiny. His father at eighty could easily pass for a man of sixty-five. His hair, although thin, still covered his head in a swatch of untinted brown. It condescended to grey only at his temples. His mother used to complain boastfully about this on their trips to Florida. She always came back with lurid stories about fending eligible widows off him with a shuffleboard cue. His father would laugh lightly, shaking his head at his wife's over-active imagination.

Throughout the years his father's face, instead of seizing up with wrinkles, had gone slack and jowly. This left him with smooth, almost cherubic features. His cheeks were rouged with a network of minuscule crisscrossing veins. The only concession to eighty years of living was a discoloured wrinkled flap of loose skin under his chin. Looking at him now, Charles fancied that that must be where his father hid his share of the ravages of time: like paint thrown on glass everything had slid down his face and collected underneath. But even that dewlap befriended him—it fluttered and wriggled like a puppy's tail, every bit as uncontrollable, imparting an air of youthful waggishness every time he spoke.

Which was why it was so damn hard trying to reason—or argue—with him. Without even knowing it he made you like him, want to agree with him. Simply because of that thing dangling from his chin—it was so damn entertaining. Charles stared at it mesmerised, thankful that he'd never come up against it in arbitration. It seemed to stretch straight out at him, beckoning, then snapped back as his father spoke.

"We had an arrangement, you know—when we were married. We made a deal. And now she's gone back on it." Turner spoke curtly, through chimneys of smoke. Charles turned away from the window.

"What do you mean, an arrangement? A wedding licence?"

"No", his father snapped.

"Well, what? A dowry?"

The dewlap rippled as his father snorted. "I may be old-fashioned, Charlie, but I'm not that old-fashioned." The dewlap was still. His father smoked quietly.

Charles was beginning to lose his patience. "She'd die if she saw you doing that", he said abruptly, realising too late his mistake. How could he, an arbitration lawyer, have been that tactless?

The dewlap was motionless but he heard his father's voice, far away and bitter: "She died because I wasn't doing that."

His training told Charles to ignore that comment. Pass it off as something said in the heat of the moment and get back to the bargaining-table. But something filial in him made him want to probe. To get to the bottom of these two people who had spent almost half a century together and whose unforeseen separation was bringing out such hostility in his father. These two totally disparate natures who had kept a forty-six year vow of consummate coexistence, including losing a daughter and raising a son.

"Now what's that supposed to mean?" Charles tried to sound offhand and uninterested.

"We ran out of things to share. We got old. Kids went, friends died—only thing we had for company was our goddam diseases. And dying. So the doctors take away the diseases, and now *she* takes away the other."

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"Dying?"

"Yep." His dewlap shook as if an earthquake had hit it.

"And that's why you won't go to the funeral? Because you're frigging *mad* at her?"

His father said nothing but his dewlap stirred.

("You are my wife." He said it almost with glee. In his thirty-five years he had never known glee. Or dizzying happiness for that matter, or rock-solid satisfaction or supercharged anticipation. Or love. Or any of the countless sensations currently electrifying the space between the sheets, crackling the air around himself and his bride of seven hours.

"I am your wife." She said it with the seriousness of a woman much older. She was nineteen. "Camilla Millicent Dodgson Turner."

"Mrs Whitney Grey Turner, if you please." He turned over on his side and put his hand gently around her tiny waist.

"Mrs Whitney Grey Turner. Wife of the famous lawyer."

"Almost famous." His hand moved up her nightdress, found the gap of the neckline and slipped in. She shuddered slightly, not from stimulation or fear, but because she was thinking hard about her future as Mrs Whitney Grey Turner.

He brought his mouth over to join his hand, and while one explored the limits of the fabric the other clambered up her breastbone, testing her skin with small flicks of the tongue. She tasted fresh and dewy. His tongue darted in and out of the deep hollows at the base of her neck, tasting.

She was still thinking. Who was this man she had married? He was gentle, immodestly gentle her body was telling her, but was his gentleness a natural outpouring of his soul or simply a means to bind the two of them forever tighter together?

"You have done a very selfish thing", she said.

He appeared not to listen, to be too caught up in plumbing the nape of her neck. She tugged at his long, loose chin.

"You have married a woman fifteen years younger than you, knowing full well you will probably die first and leave her alone for the rest of her life."

His head came up incredulously from her neck—this was their wedding night!

"But it's all right", she continued, "it's all right because I love you and want to share the rest of your life with you. Regardless of how long or short it is. That's what I was put here for. To be with you."

He looked at her for a long time; this was their wedding night.)

THAT WAS THE the arrangement. And yesterday she reneged on it. From the window Turner watched the confused exasperated way his son manoeuvred the car in his narrow driveway. It shot off in a splatter of gravel. Then the quiet descended again.

WHILE CHARLES was booming out "Ahhhhhmen" to one of his mother's favourite hymns his father was just around the corner, walking. He was in the park where he and Camilla had courted forty-seven years ago. But he wasn't thinking about Camilla because he wasn't smoking—he tended to think of her most fervidly while the tobacco was screeching through his lungs. Right now since she was no longer alive the lawyer, the man of practical outlook, did not think about her.

Instead he concentrated on an overview of the thirty-five years before she came. He had spent most of that time alone—though not necessarily lonely. Loneliness lives in flights of melancholic fancy; aloneness accepts the existence of a few basic facts. He had slowly, falteringly, become acquainted with aloneness as an only child; explored its solitude and solidity as a shy, ungregarious adolescent; and unable (or unwilling, he didn't know which) to turn his back on it as an adult had grudgingly made room for it among his legal briefs and bar association dinners. And now at the very end of his life, after he had kicked it out to make room for Camilla, that aloneness returned. It took over the spot she had vacated. And padding behind it came the quiet, descended from the loathsome quiet of his childhood, which right now howled in his ears. The man of practical outlook was deafened.

Turner felt something catch his foot. He had to stumble forward to avoid falling. He swore and looked down. A raised clump of onion grass bore the imprint of his shoe. He swore again and noticed that the entire stretch of park before him was sporting the same growth. It was the onion grass season: clumps of rigid green dotted the landscape like grown-out crew-cuts. Next to some were gouged neat round pockmarks. Children had yanked up patches of grass to hurl at the sky and watch captivated as they streamed meteor-like back to earth. The simplicity of the act made Turner envious; the child's unreasoned joy of throwing something into the air.

His envy vanished as he recalled his own childhood. He had done the very same thing at the boarding-schools his parents sent him to: a lone child in an empty playing-field, tossing his time away. Playing catch with the sun and a ball of onion grass as quiet, not his mother, looked on. He stamped through the park, seeking out and trampling clumps. And then as a young man, parents separated, mother dead, taking long walks alone to shatter the silence of study—academic quiet replaced by alfresco quiet. More clumps flattened underfoot, scrunching as the roots and bulbs crushed against his soles. But all the noise of then and now dinning inside his head, the eternal shriek and skree of facts, figures and feelings!—sometimes he thought his mind would explode. And one day years too late, long after he had given up sandbagging himself with onion grass games and walks outdoors, he met Camilla. And for forty-six years the explosive fuse spluttered only intermittently, dampened by her liquid love.

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He came to the bridge which crossed the park pond. After some hesitation he started across it. It wasn't the same bridge he knew in his courting days; that one had been a rickety wooden structure splayed across the water on knobbly pilings. From a distance it always reminded him of an old lady with her skirts hiked up wading across. The new bridge was a replacement, put in a few years ago when vandals burned the old bridge down. It was a typical County Parks Commission bridge—solid no-nonsense concrete thrusting directly from one side to the other. Turner stopped in the middle of it. He looked at everything except the water.

("Whit, I know how much you hate scenes, so I won't make one." She watched him staring at her from the end of the bed. His eyes blinked rapidly and his dewlap twitched. "Whit, I don't want to make it through the night." Her voice came to him in a tunnel, rattling hollowly. The heart attack, although sparing her life, had killed her lust for it; *vita* [his law-school Latin came back to him] without vitality. "I feel like everything's been switched off and I can't switch it back on." Her head sank into the bank of pillows. "I don't even know if I want to." She looked at him blinking and twitching. "Whitney—I love you and I've loved only you for the last forty-six years." She lifted her head a bit. "Did you know it was forty-six years?" He snorted tentatively. "Of course I knew." She settled back in the pillows. "Liar." Then she didn't speak for a long time.

When she spoke next her voice sounded run-down. Her breath came in heaves. He knew she was speaking to him through another attack, a much smaller one this time, and he took her frail fingers in his. What else to do when the only one to bring humanity to your life is about to leave it? "Imagine", she whispered, "imagine you outliving me, Whit." A flicker of a smile—or maybe it was a grimace—played across her face. Her wrinkles had doubled in the last hour, it seemed. Her face was a mass of convolutions, swallowing up any expression. She looked suddenly much older than her sixty-five years. "Sorry", she rasped.

"Sorry", he echoed. "Don't be sorry, Camilla." He tried to smooth her wrinkles but they wouldn't be budged, felt like topography under his fingers. "Please don't be sorry." He spoke soothingly, as though she were the daughter he never knew. He felt her grip loosening. "Don't be sorry, Cammy, Cammy—" he hadn't called her that since their courting days. Her eyelids flickered recognition of the distant past. "Cammy, listen to me, listen—" one hand gripped hers tighter, the other went under the bedclothes and around her still tiny waist, "—I waited thirty-five years for you once, I can wait a few more for you again—"

"Again forever", she breathed. And then just like in those old combat movies his greatest comrade, his truest friend died in his arms.)

HE WAS SMOKING on the bridge now, cigarette wedged between thumb and forefinger. It was growing dark; the service was probably over. His son would be on his way to the house soon, to arbitrate with him some more. To hell with his son. To hell with his dead wife. They were nothing but obstructions anyway, road-blocks put up to divert him from a few basic facts: he entered this world solo; was going to exit it solo; now was the time to get to know that feeling and get to know it good. What had Camilla done but distract him from these facts for most of his life, only to bail out right when he thought the two of them together had them licked? How could she have loved him so with one breath and then left him so alone by not taking the next? Camilla Camilla Camilla Camilla come back come back come back come back come back—this would not do. The man of practical outlook took charge. He finished his cigarette, sent it over the railing, and followed it.

He sank deep into the belly of the pond and waited for an ending. None came. Finally the roar of the quiet, amplified in water, became too much. Like a turtle coming out of hibernation, dewlap stretched almost to snapping, he craned his head out of the ooze. He started to move. He struck out for shore, half-hoping it wouldn't be there. His sodden clothes dragged him down. Then the pain began in his side and he remembered: he was an old, sick man and old sick men don't go swimming. The pain raced the length of his body. He felt as if he was swimming in a pool of hardening concrete. Every scoop of water, every limp kick was like rubbing himself up against rock. Yet his heart beat on, his eyes told him the shoreline was not far away. He groped and floundered and got closer.

But never quite all the way there, because he realised as he started to sink he was destined never to get all the way there. He would never totally get to know that aloneness, that feeling, not through anybody else, not even by himself. Those basic facts remained as obvious and elusive as the universe.

The pain increased. The pond grew larger. The onion grass on the nearby shore swayed and danced in the evening breeze like sea anemones.

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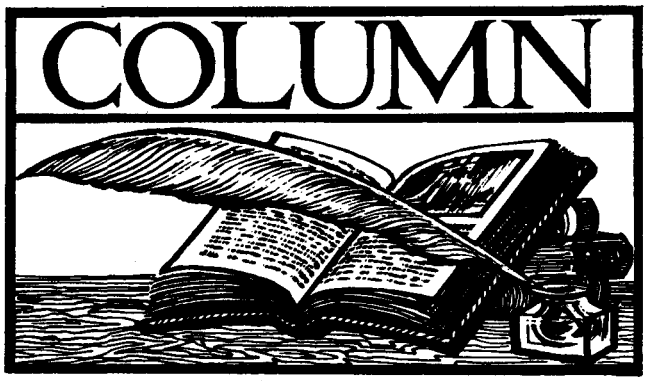

No sun—no moon!
No morn—no noon—
No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day. . . .
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member—
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flow'rs, no leaves, no birds,—
November!

ADMIRERS OF Thomas Hood the elder may forgive his being telescoped: the poem's middle section is largely about fog. Lamenting fruits and flowers could be just as anachronistic, since at all seasons they're now flown in from points south. But the cold and gloom are still authentic—which is why some of us cling to vestiges from the summer vacation: seaweed, shells, fossils, *ouzo*, Provençal rosé, smatterings of new languages, and a fast-fading tan. The tokens, we feel, will encapsulate our experience, preserving it for the winter—as if wine could bring back sunshine, or pebbles restore the sea.

The best we can do is drool over holiday snapshots and plan next year's excursions. Meanwhile, we bore our friends with our embellished memories. Take cover. Here come mine.

They begin at a tourist airport, crowded but only half-awake in the unlikely small hours. Cut-price travel means short nights. Pale nocturnal waiters serve coffee and croissants in neon-lit rustic tea-rooms with white cast-iron chairs. Passengers scan each other, looking for identical labels: Charon Tours, Tiller Flotilla, Behrboat Charter Yachts. They're shy and wary, grown-up pupils at a new school. Told to check in far too early, they roam the duty-free shops, spurning sun-glasses and silk ties. When the flight's called, a small train conveys them to the satellite. They board a jet with an unknown company name.

Four hours later, it's Heatsville. The air floods the cabin like warm water. Blinking in the sunshine, we walk more slowly, easily. Man wasn't meant to live in the north. We find our coach, the engine running to fuel the air-conditioning. Our future companions gradually fill it. They don't look too bad after all.

The drive takes an hour, along a winding coast road between sparse hills and an ink-dark sea. Villas and villages look tatty: why do southern countries lack planning laws? The worst blight is near our destination—a shabby industrial port surrounded by oil tanks and scrap metal. With relief, we pass on.

A small bay appears, bright with moored dinghies. Round the corner's the yacht club, a huddle of white houses with a clubroom and pool. As the coach stops, we're surrounded by bronzed young men in white shirts and trousers. Meet Alastair, Robert, Jamie, Jeff, Dave. Each guides a family and its luggage to an allotted villa. In a sci-fi movie, it could be a sinister scene.

But there's nothing sinister here. The villa's bare and roomy, with steps from the verandah to the sea. You can cook if you want to; but the club offers fresh, simple meals in exchange for tickets bought in advance back home. It's no *Club Mediterranée*—there are no grass skirts and cowrie shells: yet it fosters the same moneyless illusion. We need no cheques or locks; we leave our belongings around and our doors open; we live in a Coleridgean Pantisocracy bounded by the boats and the club bar.

The boating's inexhaustible. Sixteen-foot Wayfarers for the families, Toppers for tots, Lasers for the athletic, a couple of Dart catamarans, some Mirage yachts for day sailing, and a stock of sailboards—all supervised by rapid rescue boats, Avon rubber dinghies with outboard motors. There are races, picnics, expeditions to islands, dinghy flotillas, and optional trips to town. In the following week, some of us sail off in Dufour 2800s to tour more distant waters, meeting each evening in a different port.

I FOUND THE MIXTURE idyllic—the club for dinghy sailors, windsurfers, and water-skiers, the flotilla for the cruising fans. But, being a northern Puritan, I couldn't suppress a touch of uneasy doubt.

Not about seamanship, despite strong flukey winds and concern over dragging anchors. These are the small change of amateur sailing. What did slightly trouble me was the sense of taking a holiday in a plastic bubble, insulated from all but the surface of local life.

Coleridge's (and Southey's) Pantisocracy, planned for the banks of the Susquehanna, would at least have been based on communal farming. Presumably, its inhabitants would have traded with the natives. We did nothing of the sort. We bought meals out, and stocked the boat with fruit and bread and bottled water: but essentially we were a floating population, in every sense. Journalists meet taxi-drivers; yachties meet port officials and waiters. It's not exactly hands across the sea. And although by Cannes or Newport standards we were the scruffs of the yachting fraternity, to the locals we must have seemed frivolous fat-cats. Resentment sometimes showed in stony eyes.

There were many exceptions. The driver of a water-taxi, obligingly taking a group photograph; a motor-scooter mechanic, patiently repairing a hired Vespa; the staff of a tourist restaurant, cheerily mounting a folklore show whose zest was genuine, not phoney. But such encounters were rare in our week at the yacht club, where we swanned around in a monoglot dream. If this was a package tour, we were the packages. I'm not sure I like being sealed.

Yet millions do, or seem to. Every year now, 150 million Europeans travel abroad—almost the combined populations of Britain, Italy, and France. The sums involved are more than $51,000 million—nearly 2% of Western Europe's annual

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wealth. And most of the travellers are package tourists, bussing through the skies on charter flights and decanted into purpose-built hotels. In Europe, their chief destination is Italy, followed closely by Spain and Austria. In the summer months, there's an annual southward pilgrimage to soft currencies and the sun.

Recent silly-season headlines have accused holidays of causing more stress than they relieve. Researchers, it's said, have divided their victims into the placid and the anxious: the latter get het up over tickets and reservations, exchange-rates and how much to tip. It's amazing what researchers think are revelations. But, give or take quick arithmetic with a restaurant bill or a furtive check of the zip on a belt purse, most northern pilgrims surely benefit from their mass-produced adventures. Even the mishaps, in retrospect, can seem fun.

What's less certain is the benefit to the host countries. Financially, tourism means a lot to them. In Greece, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland, it supplies some 4% of the gross domestic product; in Austria, the percentage is twice as much. As a proportion of exports, visible and invisible, earnings from visitors are even more impressive: some 15% in Portugal, 18% in Austria, 19% in Greece, and 20% in Spain. Even in Britain and the United States, the proportion is more than 3%, respectively $5,000 million and $11,000 million. That's quite a handful of loose change.

THE QUESTION IS: where does it go to? Economists would answer: into the economy. But can we leave it at that? Some of the resources, obviously, are burned in the air, by jet engines, coaches, and taxis; their operators pocket the cash. More cash goes to hotels and restaurants, souvenir vendors, postcard manufacturers, guides, *son et lumière* firms, makers of suntan lotion, hirers of deck-chairs, proprietors of ancient monuments, kiosks selling nearly out-of-date film. All upright and decent, no doubt, but hardly central to a sane society. They in turn, of course, will channel the proceeds elsewhere in the economy, through their own and their employees' expenditure. Yet I can't help feeling that too much reliance on serving the visitor does strange things to a nation's psychology, if to nothing else.

It emerged in the aftermath of the Libyan bombing and associated terrorist threats. Countries in Western Europe, which had failed to forestall the American attack by imposing sanctions on Gaddafi, began to wring their hands. Not only over the loss of life and the resort to violence, but over the likely loss of US tourists in European holiday resorts. Pecksniff meets Uriah Heep. Some sturdy souls, in Britain, even attacked the "cowardice" of American tourists who stayed at home. Waiters who dislike their calling often take refuge in sneers.

But there are other reasons for not wanting to become a nation of butlers and sutlers. If it mortifies the spirit, it can also ruin the landscape. Large tracts of European coastline are now engulfed by what someone (it may have been me) called "the white cliffs of Benidorm"—pleasure-and-leisure palaces served by ruthless highways and vast, deafening airports. Villages spawn filling-stations and miscellaneous *dreck*; "beauty-spots" need car parks and are given picnic tables; in at least one European country, "picturesque" walks are identified by letters on the trees. Tourist feet erode the Parthenon and the Langdale Pikes; tourist effluent pollutes inshore waters. And what's already happened in Europe will be happening in the "Third World" before long.

IT'S HARD TO SEE what can be done about it. We're all eager for the annual or quarterly or even weekly escape from urban routine; and there's no point in despising humbler versions of our own favourite jaunts. The tide of tourism is unstoppable: all we can hope is to harness it, and perhaps erect some breakwaters.

The OECD, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, has for some time been looking at the obstacles to international tourism—but mainly with a view to knocking them down. In the late 1970s, it points out, world tourism grew 170% faster than world trade; it now accounts for about a third of the developing countries' total trade in services, while about three-quarters of the travellers come from the industrialised world. "With continued worldwide expansion of personal income and leisure time", say the OECD experts, "tourism promises to remain one of the leading growth industries of the future. . . . The image of tourism and its low position in the priorities of governments need to be substantially improved."

In line with this blithe philosophy, OECD asked its member countries why they maintained restrictions and formalities which hinder the tourist trade: currency limits, frontier controls, insurance requirements, bans on buying real estate, national discrimination among tour, travel, and accommodation firms. Not everyone answered. Those who did pleaded balance-of-payments problems (for currency restrictions), fear of illegal immigration (for visa controls), fiscal need (for taxes on tourists), unemployment (for national discrimination), and security (for restrictions on foreign airlines). I've seldom read more unconvincing guff. But among the whining excuses, two countries' answers stood out. Both Norway and Switzerland confessed to restricting foreign purchases of real estate and limiting the activities of tour operators. Why? "To ensure that the national and traditional character of certain areas should not be swamped by an excessive influx." Bravo.

It may be both smug and unrealistic to hope that poorer countries, with few natural resources and limited industrial scope, will curb their impulse to hawk what assets they have—sun, sea, and sand. They'll make all our mistakes, all over again, before they ever copy the Norwegians and the Swiss. But perhaps a few of them, repelled by tourist coach-loads crashing through game reserves and corrupting tribal communities, will be able to pull back before it's too late. Perhaps in Europe, too, countries not yet totally debauched by package tours can be persuaded to set better examples.

The first step is probably to write off selected sites as irredeemable honeypots. Let a hundred billboards flower; extend the car parks; encourage the tea chalets; embrace the visitors in a python's hug. At least it'll keep some of them

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on the beaten track, and preserve a few square metres of wilderness.

Secondly, cherish poor facilities—unmade roads, steep passes, narrow lanes and hairpin bends. Scare motorists away with tales of blind corners, boiling radiators, scraped paintwork, broken springs. There's one historic cottage in the Lake District which has never had proper parking. It's always crowded; with a car park, it would be trampled flat.

Thirdly, use planning controls. If new buildings *must* go up, make life hard for the developer. Insist on vernacular architecture, traditional materials, and appropriate design. Don't hurry through the paperwork: make 'em wait, make 'em cry, make 'em leave.

In extreme cases, ban new building altogether. If that leads to tents and caravans, ban them too; and, where there's inland water, ban cruisers used as floating homes. Prevent national parks looking parklike, and keep nature reserves natural. Provide a subject for a new Landseer: The Tourist At Bay.

But don't, finally, be entirely negative. When the French authorities closed Lascaux to preserve its cave-paintings, they built a facsimile nearby. Nowadays, in summer, tours have to be booked for hours ahead. Disneyland pioneered the notion. The Yul Brynner movie *Westworld* guyed it. Shouldn't someone else take it up?

And for those who want the real thing—travelling, not being transported—the answer's simpler still. Get down to basics, with a backpack and a bicycle. You'll have your fresh air and exercise. You'll meet the locals, without polluting their environment. And you may actually enjoy some of the deprivations that Thomas Hood felt in November:

No mail—no post—
No news from any foreign coast—
No Park—no Ring—no afternoon gentility.

Bon voyage.

M

The Ghosts

A child's empty pasteboard
Varnishsmelling mask, pink-cheeked
With biting elastic loops for the ears,
Big whiskers of horsehair
And it was a Guy Fawkes when I wanted to be the Chinaman.
The ghosts wear sweet-smelling trees,
Boulder- and mansion-masks, and puzzling
Masks of water you cannot quite see through.
They remove their masks and smile
But we cannot see because the smile
Is too wide for our eyes, like a broadcast
From a powerful station off the band,
But we pick up the shells of echoes which are masks:
Wheeling dust, rounded bush, sunken stone,
Solid shower. Your mask
Is pink-cheeked and you are a ghost
With a fleshface and I can from time to time
Pick up your wider broadcasts,

Spitting into my bosom to disperse the multitudes
Filling the world of masks with haunting echoes,
Bushels of grain, a wave flowering
With jellyfish, and an umbrella stained with salt,
With crystals like the sky of night with stars,
My grandfather's umbrella bleached with his promenades,
Light and salt having whited the canopy
As though the whole sky was becoming one star,
His umbrella broadcasting to me from its corner,
His pink cheeks and blazing lunar moustache dropped somewhere
Of an old gentleman glad to have
At last joined up with the ghost of himself.

Peter Redgrove

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Derek Stanford

Chatham Place

In memoriam Elizabeth Rossetti (née Siddal)

"Alas, we two."
Over Blackfriars Bridge,
near the Embankment, on the north-west side,
who spoke those words?
Was it a river-bird;
or did my ear conjure them from the air
uttered by lips invisible?
This day—
the tenth of February—a louring sky
bathes all things sullenly in yellow light
(a levelling harmony in sulphur-grey),
and which, alone, St Paul's—aloft—resists;
substantial bubble, imperturbable.

So it will stay until the lights come on,
later each day. Nearly at six tomorrow;
and all the while first crocuses emerging,
pointing the pathos of poor Lizzie's death—
a broken-lettered tombstone disappearing
into its parent grave.
And Gabriel said:
"As much as in a hundred years she's dead,
yet is today the day on which she died."

That afternoon she'd bought herself a coat,
having a sudden longing to be gone
out of the city, among trees and grass;
boughs coming into bud.
Why, then, that note—
that pencilled testament of dead-end hope?
Autumn in spring:
"Lord, let me come today."

Twilight's on schedule.
Hasten if you'd find
that cramped small sanctuary enclosing them,
living, so long, dream-dowered days apart:
Guggums and Gug, sketching and versifying.

Perhaps you see her, with her red-gold hair,
loose as he liked it; feeding her pet bullfinch;
or, half-extinguished, by the studio fire,
rocking a childless cradle, murmuring
"Hush, Ned! You'll wake him."
Then the darkened room,
reeking of laudanum, and the empty phials
when Gabriel found her:

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on her breast a note
which he made away with—only seen by two
besides himself (but not the coroner).

Light almost gone. Still no lamps shed their ray
illuminating that scrawl of scrappy paper.
"Number Fourteen", it was.
One hunts in vain—
for 14 Chatham Place has been pulled down.

"Alas, we two."
That famished sea-gull cry.

György Petri

To Imre Nagy

(**from** *Hólabda a kézben—Snowball in the hand*—**1984**)

You were impersonal, too, like the other leaders,
bespectacled, sober-suited; your voice lacked
sonority, for you didn't know quite what to say

on the spur of the moment to the gathered multitude. This urgency
was precisely the thing you found strange. I heard you,
old man in pince-nez, and was disappointed,
not yet to know

of the concrete yard where most likely the prosecutor
rattled off the sentence, or
of the rope's rough bruising, the ultimate shame.

Who can say what you might have said
from that balcony? Butchered opportunities, it is certain,
never return. Neither prison nor death
can resharpen the cutting edge of the moment

once it's been chipped. What we can do, though, is remember
the hurt, reluctant, hesitant man
who none the less soaked up
anger, delusion
and a whole nation's blind hope,

when the town woke to gunfire
that blew it apart.

Translated from the Hungarian by
Clive Wilmer and George Gömöri

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NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

The Soft-Handed Authoritarians

By Edward Pearce

THE CURRENT flavour-of-the-month on television has been *The Monocled Mutineer*, a professionally-written piece of contempt for historical nicety which the BBC in a rather brassy way promoted like a mouthwash. Alan Bleasdale is supposed to have blown the gaff on the crimes of the Establishment in suppressing a mutiny at Etaples in northern France during the First World War. The hero is Percy Toplis, bit of a rogue, willing to con and thieve since infancy, but a rebel against authority and thus a good thing. The fact that Toplis appears also to have been a rapist and a murderer was played down rather. For the justification of Toplis is that he is meant by the author to symbolise revolt, justifiable military mutiny against the authorities who brought us the Somme, Ypres, Paschendaele, and the amusing little Nivelle offensive.

Historically this is nonsense. There is no evidence that Toplis was even in the neighbourhood of Etaples at the time of the mutiny. The two stories—of soldiers turning against the officers sending them to death, and of the criminal and con-man on the run—have been spliced together with all the credibility of the Book of Genesis. However, Mr Bleasdale is set free to make up the history he likes by the freezing of all documents relating to the Etaples Mutiny for 100 years. We can be told the truth or as much of it as is good for us after "weeding" . . . in the year 2017. This is an aspect of English life which Americans and indeed most West Europeans must find hardest to understand. The "Mother of Parliaments" is a reactionary old hag who keeps certain prizes out of the children's reach on a shelf too high for their pathetic arms to reach. The unspeakable Official Secrets Act (Section 2), passed in a moment of authoritarian hysteria at the frenzied outset of the War, is still law. The menu of the Civil Service canteen at the Ministry of Agriculture is a classified secret, and you can in principle be sent to prison for publishing it. For revealing to *The Guardian* that Michael Heseltine when Minister of Defence authorised the issue, to guards at Greenham Common nuclear-missile base, of small arms, Sarah Tisdall *was* sent to prison.

We have in England a good deal of ossified practice which is nearer to south-continental fascism or to the antique super-Right of the Lords Liverpool, Sidmouth, and Eldon than to the post-1945 European world. We have an authoritarian tradition separate from, and different to, the most rigorous sort of economic competitive capitalism. But we have it today in a surly, defeated, supererogatory form, though it is still an inhibitor of the free spirit.

The English law of libel, used by devious lawyers of the stamp of the late Gilbert Beyfus, existed to protect public men from private comment. It by no means confined itself to the old Establishment, but comfortably adjusted to the new. The successful lawsuit brought by Aneurin Bevin, Richard Crossman, and Morgan Phillips against *The Spectator* for stating that they had been, on one conference occasion, the worse for drink is a case in point. The judge, despite being a grotesque antediluvian who could have fitted with facility into the 1860s, went to great lengths to send three public men of the Left home heavily recompensed against a weekly journal. Crossman, with the dreadful arrogance which gave him a certain evil distinction, delightedly informed posterity in his posthumous Diaries that the actual facts reported by the paper were entirely true!

It is not an offence to slander the Prime Minister nor yet do we follow the Thai tradition of jailing people for *lèse-majesté*. But the governing classes do not trust the people, and have no intention of starting. At times, government and a large part of the press seem to be locked in what could pass in a bad light as a conspiracy to report news in a way acceptable to government—and for the rest of the time to sluice out people's minds with the Enid Blytonish half-witted world of Royalty and soap operas (to the extent that they can be distinguished). Ironically, it was Aneurin Bevan who described the British press with only modest hyperbole as "the most prostituted in the world". It has not in this respect improved very much since then.

I AM NO very bitter critic of Richard Nixon, and think that in some ways the American media lost their sense of perspective in the Watergate episode. Yet it was right and desirable that the truth should come out; there would not have been a chance in a thousand that "Prime Minister Nixon" would have been significantly embarrassed had he done exactly the same thing as head of government in Britain! A couple of noisy debates, a Select Committee, Civil Servants to decline giving evidence and to declare various tapes "classified", the English Official Secrets Act standing by like a hired heavy to threaten any Editor who moved with imprisonment—and all would have been well.

For Miss Tisdall was imprisoned, and Clive Ponting would have been imprisoned if a jury had not effectively voted that he was guilty as charged but under a statute which was fundamentally unjust. The acquittal of Ponting, who had informed an MP of untruths and inconsistencies in his own Minister's conduct, was a great glory of the jury system. A

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servile judge had dropped hints like confetti in the direction of conviction. Indeed, as the absurd law stood, he *was* guilty. The jury took it upon itself with magnificent presumptuousness to rule not on the narrow evidence but on the constitutional nature of the law itself. The Government suffered a blow which it still feels. Authority was defied in the way that on rare but celebrated occasions judges have defied it. The declaration of general warrants to be illegal in Wilkes's case and the minority judgment of Lord Justice Atkin on the Home Secretary's peremptory powers of imprisonment in wartime are two lonely if eminent instances.

Because the British Tradition is a muddled one, authoritarianism is accompanied by an odd feebleness. To revert momentarily to the world of Percy Toplis, crime of almost every kind is now out of control in Britain, as the limited (and always understanding) statistics demonstrate. The increase in the last 25 years is Everest-on-graph. But while the fussy old men of office in Britain mutter into their unconsoling gin, nobody knows how, nobody very much tries, to do anything about it. We rather specialise, outside the area of selfish group interests, in broken-wristed authoritarianism. It is applied where their own interests lie. The despised middle classes and the losing end of the working class, to whom crime happens, must make the best of their condition. And, like so much in Britain, government is numb and unresponsive, but moved to spasms of unpleasantness, behaving quite disgracefully in the field of immigration. When there is a chance of deporting some respectable Sinhalese accountant, in Britain for seven years with irregular papers, it is delighted; willing also to deport a child of two back to Pakistan until somebody hollers.

Unfortunate the countervailing powers in this country are so much less than they should be. It is posturing affectation to speak of our press as "the Fourth Estate". We have little power and less courage. The law of libel has made us; and the Honours System which doles out knighthoods and peerages to elder journalists has not only bought us, but bought us cheap.[1] A self-respecting journalist exists to tell the truth and to make trouble: very much the same thing. But men in expectation of ennoblement do not by definition make trouble. Westland is as grave an example of governmental dishonesty as Watergate. It leaves the Prime Minister lying in her teeth, but the press were for the most part very happy to talk about things blowing over; and no single-minded pursuit of the evidence characterised our treatment of the affair. When, eleven years ago, Jeremy Thorpe, the Liberal leader, kept low company in a series of episodes which led to his reluctant arraignment on a charge of conspiracy to murder, the orthodox Fleet Street press assumed the best and wrote some quite preposterous things about storms-in-teacups. Thorpe was acquitted but was sufficiently damaged by the whole affair to be removed very salutarily from politics. The campaign to print embarrassing evidence about friends in low places and disgraceful though not criminal conduct was left to the irregular troops of *Private Eye*. If it had stayed with the

[1] I would be very sorry to have this general criticism attributed to my old boss, and present colleague, Bill Deedes, whose recent peerage properly derives from his service as a Cabinet Minister.

Unemployment and labour market flexibility: The United Kingdom

by Guy Standing

Unemployment in the U.K. has risen dramatically since the 1970s. It has done so in the context of the 'British experiment' whereby macro-economic (monetary) policy has been designed to control inflation, while micro-economic policy has been directed towards employment. Although intended as a medium-term strategy, the short-term declines in output and employment have been greater than expected, while 'deindustrialisation' has accelerated. From the monetarist stance government policy has become more 'supply side', with deregulation and privatisation being key factors, coupled with concerted efforts to make the labour market more flexible. This book reviews the arguments and evidence on labour flexibility and examines the Special Measures adopted to check the growth of unemployment until supply-side measures could take effect. It concludes by considering alternative strategies designed to combine labour flexibility with income security, notably the merits of work reorganisation, profit-sharing and a social dividend approach to social security.

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by H. P. Gray, T. Pugel and I Walter

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by R. P. Dore, with contributions by K. Taira

This study is on the industrial adjustment process in industrialised Japan. Most other industrialised countries would no doubt name Japan as among the causes for the pressure to make adjustments at home. At the same time Japan has undergone a very thorough process of adjustment itself and only a few years ago it evoked protectionist reactions because of its low-cost, labour-intensive exports of manufactured goods. Today, partly as a result of this protectionism, Japan is a major force in virtually all fast-growing technology industries apart from aerospace. Its ability to become an important producer and exporter in many of these areas, and to do so with a minimum of friction and unemployment, makes it a rare example of successful adjustment.

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by Jon McLin

The outcome of a major research project, this book examines countries and issues that are neglected in most petroleum studies. The countries are the non-OPEC Third World producers, most of which have only modest resources, but whose growing collective output is having an increasing impact in oil markets. The issues concern the broad effects which oil and gas production can have on socio-economic development in these countries—not only in macro-economic terms but also in relation to manpower development, industrial spinoffs and local/ regional effects.

ISBN 92-2-105505-1 **£7.30**

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respectable press, Mr Thorpe would still be prospering among us.

The Lamentable little bug of reverence is with us still. We have plenty of satire and derision, but it doesn't hurt and is rapidly adapted, very sensibly, by politicians, who delightedly use *Private Eye* characterisations of themselves. This is in the tradition of the British aristocracy, able by some herd gene to deflect antipathy by adaptation, damage-limitation, and a generous embrace which takes in the critic. In consequence we are not an estate; we are a trailer.

Patronage takes many forms; in Quebec in the 1940s Maurice Duplessis signified his power by reserving for senior members of his party, the *Union Nationale*, the first 400 numbers on registration plates, intimating advance or decline in his favour with each year's reshuffle of precedence. Perhaps a little more subtly, the current editor of *The Spectator* is described as being exalted to transcendent levels after shooting, on a visit to the estate of some landed inheritor, his first stag. Asked what names should be added to the guest list for the journal's annual party, he is said to have replied: "Oh, just the Dufferins, the Douros, and the Devonshires."

Snobbery and aspiration play their own subtle part in the anaesthesia of press and public. A nation drugged on the doings of futile plumpish Fergie, a press edited and manned by souls in pursuit of the magic, particles of nobility (our answer to Duplessis's number-plates) is not a sturdy critic or free intelligence. And should anyone step out of line where the interests of government lie, the judges stand waiting. Now, our judges, appointed in secrecy by the Lord Chancellor, are hugely weighted by upbringing, political conviction, and convention to the old established order of things. The summings-up in *R. v. Thorpe* and *R. v. Ponting* were shameful affairs, uttered by men to whom the notion of separation of powers is an offensive foreign abstraction. President Roosevelt tried in the late 1930s to pack the Supreme Court. No British politician has needed to cheat in that way—the packing comes programmed in. Lord Atkin, a lonely independent spirit, remarked in 1940 that he had heard opinions on the prerogative that morning which could with propriety have been uttered in the Court of Kings Bench in the reign of Charles the First.

IRONICALLY, the unmistakable Left-wingery to be found in the BBC (to Mrs Thatcher's fury) is grafted on to a body of pompous hierarchy which would do credit in its intrigue and sense of precedent to the Habsburg court of Franz Josef.

The BBC, bloated, uneconomic, alternately bullying and seducing its critics, is very British—no compliment these days. The fictional agitprop put out by Mr Bleasdale turning a criminal into a Robin Hood figure comes with the full blessing of the Langham Square papacy and its large advertising department, paid for by a viewers' licence exacted rather than won from the public. The BBC, like the governing group, is in the technical sense irresponsible. It may be pestered but it is not answerable. However, a certain countervailing pressure *is* exerted. *The Monocled Mutineer* may be only amusing, proficient nonsense but the papers on the Etaples Mutiny are still locked in the nursery cupboard and intended to stay there for 31 years. The prospect of Parliament, that ladder of advancement, getting them out, or of any not-yet-knighted Fleet Street editor raising a creditable clamour was negligible.

It will now be genuinely difficult to justify continued suppression. The BBC, however absurd its vehicle, has done some good and the anger which it recurringly provokes among governments is the testimony at which good journalism rejoices.

There has to be a fight to liberalise this country, whose tribal instincts are so instinctively submissive and accommodating to soft-handed authoritarianism.

The Etaples Mutiny and the revelation of what actually happened would be a start; the abolition of Section Two of the Official Secrets Act the precondition to getting things right. The abolition of the aristocracy will have to wait 500 years. It has too many hungry friends outside.

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Terror & Error

IT COULD BE THAT the reason why we still have not managed to produce a level-headed account of the history of the French Revolution is that it very much affects our own history. The quasi-automatic transposition of the old debate on the Revolution into present-day terms continues to obsess us. François Furet[1] reconstitutes and interprets this debate as it was argued in another time, and at a very different intellectual level, when it was focused on Edgar Quinet's *History of the Revolution*, published in 1865. Bear in mind that this is an argument within the Left, and not between supporters and opponents of the Revolution. All the participants claim allegiance to *l'héritage révolutionnaire*. But all of them also engage in the historic controversy without ever losing sight of a highly political stake: the future development and programme of the republicans.

In particular, this was the position of one young lawyer who, in a series of articles, took the side of Quinet. For him, as for the author he defended, it was vital to prepare for the

[1] *La gauche et la Révolution au milieu du XIX^e siècle*. By FRANÇOIS FURET. Hachette.

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future by showing that the democratic tradition must be distinguished from its Jacobin (today we would call it totalitarian) perversion. Only on this condition, after the fall of the Second Empire, would a democratic government be viable, accepted, elected by genuinely universal suffrage, and based on what would later be known as "the republican consensus". The young lawyer was Jules Ferry.

Quinet's most virulent antagonists (who included Louis Blanc) accused him of weakening and betraying the democratic movement. Let us not forget that this particular "traitor" had chosen exile so as not to live under Napoleon III. Thus, one section of the Left already wanted to impose upon another section the duty to lie about the past on the pretext of safeguarding the cohesion of the present.

What past? Quinet based his argument on a heart-breaking fact so glaring that it had taken an equally glaring arrogance to conceal it: namely that the Revolution had been a defeat. Begun for the sake of establishing political freedom, it had led first to the Terror, then to the military dictatorship of Napoleon Bonaparte. Its social reforms were indisputable; but from that point of view, as Tocqueville had earlier observed, the Revolution had already been under way, if not three-quarters completed, when it broke out. True success would have been to found a lasting and peaceful system of political liberty in France. But, Quinet said, the major effect of the Revolution had been to pave the way for grosser forms of tyranny. Worse still, the second Revolution of 1848 had also engendered a Republic incapable of governing, only to end in a *coup d'état* and the seizure of sovereignty by an authoritarian régime.

WHAT A SERIES OF failures! Any other political family would have needed a far less disastrous record to start it questioning the validity of its ideas. And the first idea to be re-examined, Quinet said, was the pathetic doctrine (still advanced in the 20th century) that justified the Terror by "circumstances". Or, sometimes, by the article of faith according to which (said Clemenceau) the Revolution must be taken "as a whole". The thesis is familiar: it was used after the *putsch* of October 1917 to justify the Bolshevik Revolution, and after it Stalinism. The heart of the debate is the question of whether 1793 "perfected" or demolished 1789.

To this day, we French appear to be far from weary of quibbling on this theme. In one strikingly contemporary passage, Quintet dissects what was to become a major sophism of the 20th century:

> "Equality without liberty, and quite apart from liberty—this, then, is the ultimate pipedream which our theorists would have us pursue throughout the whole course of our history. It is the vision that draws us on. . . . I must postpone the quest for political guarantees until the day when the proper social stage is achieved. . . . I must suppose that the chimera will soon be achieved. . . . But who is to judge whether it is so in fact? . . . Once again liberty has been postponed. Wouldn't it be better to say, right from the beginning, that it will be postponed eternally?"

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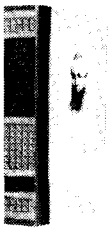

SELECTED WRITINGS OF LORD ACTON
VOLUME II
ESSAYS IN THE STUDY AND WRITING OF HISTORY

By John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton
Edited by J. Rufus Fears

This second volume of the Liberty*Classics* edition of *The Selected Writings of Lord Acton* brings together lectures, articles, and reviews which demonstrate Acton's lifelong devotion to the study of history. Acton's concept of liberty was the unifying theme of the essays collected in the first volume of this edition, *Essays in the History of Liberty;* in this volume may be found the historical studies upon which Acton drew to explicate his understanding of the idea of liberty.

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These two volumes, edited by J. Rufus Fears, Professor of Classical Studies at Boston University, will be followed shortly by a concluding volume, *Essays in Religion, Politics, and Morality,* which includes a significant selection from the unpublished Acton papers.

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As for that era's greatest authority on the Revolution, Jules Michelet, his reservations are not so much to do with the Terror itself (which both historians are equally stern in condemning) as with the manner of explaining it. While Quinet saw 1793 as a simple relapse into the *absolutisme ancien*, Michelet grasps the fact that it is a phenomenon without precedent, something new in history. François Furet draws attention to an unrecognised (or perhaps deliberately neglected) aspect of Michelet's analysis of Jacobinism. For the author of the *History of the French Revolution*, completed in 1853, the 3,000 societies and 40,000 committees of the *club des Jacobins* subjected France, ahead of its time, to what we now know as One-Party rule and indeed "democratic centralism."

Nowadays we are all too familiar with the Jacobin club's technique of domination. Furet sums up Michelet's account as:

> "Direction by an ideological orthodoxy, discipline by a centralised militant apparatus, systematic purging of enemies and friends, authoritarian manipulation of elected institutions."

How right Michelet was! This new technique of power was of quite a different kind from the absolutism of the *Ancien Régime*.

IF THE REVOLUTION was the focus of historical and political thinking in 19th-century France, right from the start it also drew the attention and consideration of the rest of Europe. Karl Marx, among others, made repeated references to it in the vast body of his work. But he never wrote a complete study of the French Revolution—and so it is a rather useful idea to make a compilation of his many scattered comments on the theme. As in *La gauche et la Révolution*, François Furet's study[2] concludes with an anthology of its supporting texts. The first of the two anthologies, at any rate, is worth reading if only for the literary delights it provides.

Less entertaining, but still trenchant, Marx enables us to examine what "scientific socialism", based on Historical Materialism, can contribute to the understanding of the French Revolution. The well-known Marxist account presents the event as the conquest of political power by the bourgeoisie, now the new masters of "the productive forces". But Marx, like everybody else, comes up against the riddle of the Terror; he is unable to explain it by purely socio-economic causes, refusing as he does to see ideology and sheer politics as anything but "superstructures", with no determining effect upon the real. So he alternates between two opposing theories of the Terror, sometimes defining it as a means at the service of "bourgeois interests", sometimes as a dictatorship at the service of the masses who wish to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Marx was nothing if not a deft dialectician.

Although he pays full tribute to the author of the Communist Manifesto, François Furet is placidly severe in pointing out "the impoverishment of historical analysis caused by this tyranny of the materialist interpretation." And he adds, charitably:

> "Marx utilises History more as a reservoir of illustrations of his theory than as an instrument of research having its own intellectual constraints."

In 1869 Michelet enriched his History with a bitter preface, entitled "*Le tyran*"; it is reproduced in full at the end of *La gauche et la Révolution*. He said of the Terror: "Beneath its confusion it was a time of dictatorship." This dictatorship led before long to the tyranny of Bonaparte. "The long-winded Jacobin tyrant brought the soldier. And the soldier tyrant brought back the Jacobin."

What Michelet teaches here is that dictatorship and democracy constitute primal, elemental realities, and they have to be confronted in no matter what kind of "basic" socio-economic conditions. We can only echo his astonishment when he asks: "What kind of obstinacy is it, then, by which so clear a confrontation is always obfuscated?"

[2] *Marx et la Révolution française*. By FRANÇOIS FURET. Flammarion.

The "*NRF*"

BETWEEN THE TWO World Wars, said François Mauriac, *La Nouvelle Revue française* was "the compass rose (*rose des vents*) of French literature." While guiding the reading public, it was also indispensable to any young author intent on avoiding the obvious and exploring unknown waters. To change the metaphor, it was both a way in to Editions Gallimard, and that publisher's flagship. As the precursor of the firm, the *Revue* still has its initials, *NRF*, on the cover of every Gallimard book.

It was worthwhile, therefore, to investigate the origins of so influential a magazine—in itself a literary movement, although one that disclaimed theory and relied on flair for its choices and its judgments. To retrace its history to the beginning is to watch the germination and growth of what until World War II was the acme of contemporary taste, with its own dominant style and tone. Today it looks like a vanished literary civilisation, whose writers and readers enjoyed a relationship which no longer exists.

Such was the project conceived at the end of the 1940s by a youngish teacher of literature, Auguste Anglès. During the Occupation, he had made his name as a literary critic on *Confluences* (the magazine published in Lyon by René Tavernier, one of the leaders of the Resistance). After the Liberation, he was appointed the regional Delegate for Information of the *Commissariat de la République* (or provisional government) in the Rhône-Alps region. When he returned to his literary studies, he realised that the research he had in mind would take him at least 30 years—partly because it was hampered by his university career, which was spent mostly abroad, and partly by the paradoxical handicap of so many documents having survived. Letters, notebooks,

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private diaries, as well as unpublished or later published texts, were an embarrassment of riches.

> "I'm swamped by a deluge of documents [Anglès told an interviewer in 1973]. Those people never stopped writing. Diaries, notebooks—they kept everything. It's a whole world coming back to life. . . ."

And, thanks to his pen, so it does: day by day and even hour by hour.[1] Yet the accumulation of big and small occurrences, the detailed account of what this creative microcosm was doing and thinking, never becomes tedious. Anglès is so skilful that his narrative is as vivid as real life. He also has a sense of humour, spicing his admiration with amusement at the foibles which no great men—especially literary men—seem to lack. Narrative chapters are interspersed with analyses of the prevailing trends—virtually, as Anglès says, directives—among a group of writers who nevertheless shunned any notion that they formed *une école*.

The History of the *NRF* before 1914 forms a reasonably homogeneous whole, if only because publication was suspended during World War I. The first issue, fruit of long preparation, appeared on 1 February 1909. The last in that series came on 1 August 1914; publication was not resumed until 1 June 1919. In his first volume (1978), Anglès traced the intellectual ancestry, aesthetic development, and practical preparations which enabled the *NRF* group to assemble and create its own forum. His second volume—published posthumously (he died in 1983) shows how despite its lack of organisation and its occasional disagreements, the group managed to impose itself, striking a chord which no one could ignore. Its members made their impact in the first place by their own work. In its early issues the *NRF* published André Gide's *La porte étroite*, Paul Claudel's *L'annonce faite à Marie* and *L'otage*, and Valery Larbaud's *Fermina Marquez* and *Journal de Barnabooth*, to name only a few. The magazine also welcomed younger writers, such as Jean Giraudoux and Saintléger Léger (the future Saint-John Perse). At the same time, it was from the start and perhaps predominantly a critical publication. For Gide and his friends, reacting against the lingering Romantic cult of "inspiration", criticism was an integral part of creative writing. Paul Valéry, with his intellectual approach to poetic composition, was an obvious exponent of this view. The esteem in which the *NRF* held criticism explains the abundance and quality of the "*notes*" which were so much its speciality, making it quite literally a "*revue*". Gide and Larbaud contributed many; but so did Jean Schlumberger, Jacques Copeau, and Jacques Rivière, the *NRF*'s Secretary and later Editor. A few authors now forgotten, like the colourful dilettante Henri Ghéon, nevertheless played an important part in shaping the group's outlook. And in the tables of contents of that time there figured such eminent future scholars and teachers as André Suarès and, most notably, Albert Thibaudet.

The *NRF* also formed the basis for other activities: the celebrated "Pontigny decades", annual conferences of writers, artists, and philosophers from all over Europe; the new impetus given to the drama when Copeau founded the Vieux-Colombier Theatre in 1913, to put the group's ideas into practice; and, last but far from least, the establishment of the modest "*Comptoir d'éditions*"—the original title of the illustrious house of Gallimard.

Of course, the picture is not all rosy. The *NRF* ignored *Le Grand Meaulnes*, although its author Alain-Fournier was Jacques Rivière's brother-in-law. It made no bid for Apollinaire and *Alcools*. Its biggest mistake, Anglès admits, was to have rejected *Du côté de chez Swann*—unread. Although there were attenuating circumstances—among them, Proust's very unreasonable letters to the editorial board—it was a dreadful error, only remedied later by the incessant efforts which Gide and Rivière made to explain and publicise Marcel Proust.

One test of a great historical work is to dispel the illusion that what happened in the past was inevitable; to give us back the sense that daily life is full of surprises, that things might have turned out differently, and that the course they took was unexpected at the time. That makes this one of those rare works which help us to understand the precarious pilgrimage of the human spirit.

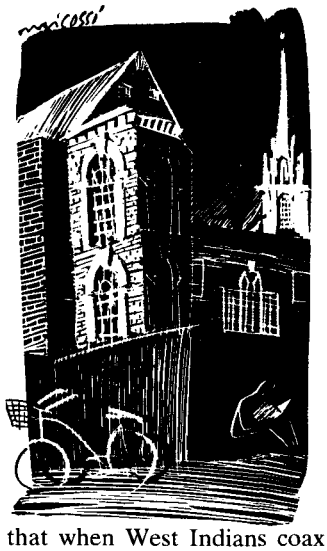
J.-F.R.

[1] *André Gide et le premier groupe de "La Nouvelle Revue française."* Vol. II: *L'âge critique, 1911-1912*. By AUGUSTE ANGLÈS. Gillimard.

Pentecostal Paradise?

Little Corner-Churches

By Roy Kerridge



"BLACK PEOPLE can't organise anything", an Indian remarked to a West Indian friend, as we waited for the Finsbury Park carnival procession, which was half an hour late.

"What? Who says we can't? And anyway, you're pretty black yourself."

Luckily the procession, a very good one, arrived at that moment. However, the gibe may well have rankled, for all I know. Never one to tolerate a rankling gibe, I have decided to clear this matter up once and for all. It is often supposed that when West Indians coax a grant from a local London council for a Black Youth Centre, a Notting Hill Carnival, a Self-Help Project, or whatever, and nothing much happens except that the grant disappears, it is their faulty organisational ability that is to blame. Not so. In fact they are often

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brilliant organisers, and their talent lies in organising grants out of the council. Less sophisticated, more honest West Indians, those who go to church, have created complex Christian organisations that encompass most of the needs of everyday life without troubling outsiders at all.

The churches in Britain began in the 1950s as prayer meetings held in bedsitting-rooms and front parlours, often following snubs or stand-offishness from white Christians. If they grew into "West Indian churches" it was done unconsciously. Somebody who had belonged to, say, the "First Born Church of the Living God" would convince his friends that his church was the best road to salvation. All the members would just happen to be West Indians, yet when they expanded and bought or rented halls or church buildings, people of all colours would find a genuine welcome. Thousands of West Indians who have been welcomed and made to feel at home in old-established English churches have not become Pentecostal. However, the singing and the sermons of our new Pentecostalists offer an enchanting insight into Caribbean life, and should not be missed.

Redemption Hymnals, slim red books, are usually used in Pentecostal as in most Nonconformist churches. The heyday of the great Negro spirituals ended when congregations in America and the West Indies became literate. Yet in both those places, old-time songs and new gospel songs are still sung after the main service, whenever there is a late-night Jamboree. During a service, traditional choruses, simple one-verse songs, are sung between hymns and orations to much rattling of tambourines.

I Want to Sing and Shout, The Things I Used To Do, and *One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—I am on my way to Heaven* are popular examples.

Unfortunately for the innocence of such churches, grants were held out to some of them by jargon-speaking officials from the GLC—the now defunct Greater London Council—and in many boroughs such grants are still on offer. Church leaders are enticed to political meetings, and induced to follow a Welfare Party Line by opening West Indian "Old Age Pensioner Centres" in their churches. Here the pensioners are expected to do handicrafts, which are shown to the black militant leader Paul Boateng and other bigwigs when the grant comes up for review. Such meddling brings a note of anxiety to church life. The notion of Old People's Centres is not very West Indian. Jamaican elderly ladies can be strong as iron, and usually run the church. When they grow frail, they often retire to the West Indies, sometimes living fairly well on the proceeds of the sale of their English house. They certainly don't need special "Centres".

However, on "Centre Day", church members of all ages are persuaded to attend and to feverishly make handicrafts, often painting on cloth. Tiny children and strapping teenagers become honorary pensioners. I have been roped in myself, and made wonky handicrafts with the best of them.

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IT IS TO BE HOPED that proximity with the Welfare-statists does not destroy the delightful and jargon-free language of the church services. Here are some extracts from sermons and testimonies, chiefly heard in the "New Testament Church of God" and the "Church of God of Prophecy".

"You know, God makes everything for a purpose. He does not want us to smoke tobacco or ganja [marijuana]. No! He gives us tobacco leaves so we can spread them on our fields for manure. He gives us ganja so if you are ill you can boil a leaf in hot water, drink it and get better. . . ."

"When the flood waters cover the land, the strong swimmers must have made for the Ark through the stormy waters. Now I really and truly believe with all my heart that God sealed up the door of the Ark so that Noah couldn't save them. A good man like Noah would have tried with all his might to save them, sinners or not! . . ."

"Back home in Jamaica there is this place called Flat Rock. The rock bridge is high above the deep waters. No one can fall off Flat Rock and live. But one time I swerve me car, and it go over Flat Rock! As the car go over the edge, I threw the door open and jumped and caught hold of the ledge and climbed back, safe. There I could see the car hundreds of feet below me in the clear water with the door open and light on. Some young people came along in another car. I tell them what happen, and they all go on their knees and pray. It was then I realised God had chosen me for a special purpose. No man can drive off Flat Rock and live. Yet here I am! . . ."

"I was not always a pastor, you know. I used to be a tief [thief] until I became a Christian. When I asked Jesus into my life, I felt so good, I tief no more, I just took out my old banjo and began to play *Happy in the Lord.* . . ."

"I am a Hindu from Trinidad by birth, and when I was fourteen I went to see a film about Jesus. The leading actor was not even a Christian, yet when I learn of Jesus's life I could not eat or sleep. At night I cried, I tried to pray, I was in fever, and I could hear Jesus talking to me. My family worried about me, but they realised that if I gave in and acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord, then He would give me peace. . . ."

LAST WEEK MY OWN CORNER-CHURCH, the "Church of God of Prophecy", organised a coach trip to the seaside—to Hunstanton in Norfolk, a resort they had

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never tried before. As the artist Jessica Gwynne owned a cottage nearby, I also arranged to meet her there. Soon the coach was full, and the burly Sikh driver was heading eastward in a chorus of gospel songs, some from tapes and headphones, others from the mouths of the passengers. By the time we were speeding through unfamiliar fenny countryside, with dykes, windmills, canals, and fields bursting with the goodness of wheat, everyone was singing, repeating simple verses over and over again in haunting, throaty tones, with many little private wails and embellishments.

Well, He picks me up
And He turns me round.
And He puts my feet on higher ground,
Jesus is all right, all right.

Some Sweet Day, Fire in My Bones and others were sung, each Brother or Sister having a favourite. "This is the one that sweet me", as they said.

It's me, it's me, it's me, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer,
Not my mother, not my father, but me, O Lord,
Standing in the need of prayer.

Stopping at Ely Cathedral car-park, the Sikh driver announced a break of fifteen minutes, and Sister Ruth and I went inside the huge building. I showed her the wonderful ceilings, and two other Sisters soon joined us, loud in admiration. Many West Indians have been forced to the conclusion that England is not a Christian country; I felt proud to show them that this had not always been so, and was not quite true even today.

"Why did no one tell us about these places?" one of the women asked.

On our way once more, we reached Hunstanton, once a holiday home of "the Father of Modern Literature", P. G. Wodehouse. Most of the youngsters were swallowed up in the funfair, while their elders made for the souvenir shops. One Sister went for a lone paddle, and Sister Ruth and I admired the strange cliffs, white on top and reddish-brown below, in separate bands, like some strange geological chocolate milkshake.

Jessica Gwynne met us and whisked us to her country retreat, to meet her family and eat delicious red gooseberries. Her garden led down to a salt-water creek with a strong current and boaty people everywhere. Sister Ruth and I tentatively boarded the *Jessica*, and the ship's namesake handled the outboard motor. I had forgotten to explain that every machine I approached breaks instantly; much against my will, I have a fanatical Luddite in my aura.

Sure enough, the motor put-putted into silence, and we had forgotten to bring the oars. Panic-stricken, I imagined us missing the coach, drifting alone till the tide bore us to a heathen land such as France. As the creek was traffic-jammed full of boats, rescue was soon at hand, and we were taken in tow, though we had to jump across the sea from our boat on to the rescuing vessel.

This made a good story when we rejoined the others, and was greeted with many a cry of "*Is it?*"—Jamaicanese for "Really?"

As the coach set off for London, one of the head-shawled Sisters who had admired Ely began to tell "Anancy" stories—the comic folk-tales told throughout the Caribbean. Vincent Osbourne, the actor from St Kitts, once described his great-grandmother, Muma, to me.

"She had one tooth in her head, and she'd tell me marvellous stories, all about Br'er Chookaba, a bogeyman."

"My daughter's a teacher, but she found her classes were too unruly", the head-shawled Sister on the coach said. "I told her all the Anancy stories again, and now she tells one before each lesson. All the children laugh and then settle down good as gold."

As the Sikh drove us back to London, two of the small boys told each other Anancy stories in the cockney Jamaican of London streets and playgrounds.

"There was Monkey, right? Him went to Snake's house, right? When he reach at-a Snake's yard, two Snakes come out, right?"

And so on, right?

I fell into a day-dream, and thought of what I would have done if I had been Dictator at the time the first West Indians of the 1950s came to Britain. Hyde Park should have been covered in tents to accommodate the newcomers and protect them from "No Coloured" landlords until they found their feet. The pleasure the Sisters took in exploring Ely Cathedral made me decide to throw in free coach-tours to castles, cathedrals, stately homes, the Lake District, and so on. "Know Your Country" I would have called these. By the time everyone had been personally welcomed by the Queen, the future would hold no fears for them. Now, after 30 years of English life, England may be coming into her own for West Indians and their children, thanks largely to the little corner-churches so despised by militant bureaucrats and political Black Power types.

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A Special Book Section

Literature & Criticism

Precious Metals

On Money in Literature—By P. N. Furbank

A possible way to approach the subject of money in literature might be to compare those writers who have been in a good relation to money with those who have been in a bad one. Of course, in order to have a relationship to money at all, one needs to possess some of the stuff—which is not the normal condition of writers, or at least of literary reviewers. It is perhaps for this reason that literary and artistic earnings give such peculiar pleasure and are our most vivid image of blameless physical enjoyment. George Augustus Sala, in his *Life and Adventures*, records that:

> "J. Littleton Holt, having received £1,000 sterling for some shares, emptied them into his bed and slept among them. Paganini 'washed his hands' in the sovereigns that Mrs. Sala paid him for his performance (though he gave the infant Sala the equivalent in a banknote). Frédéric Soulié, the novelist, took a foot-bath of gold (received for the first volume of his *Mémoires du Diable*) smoking a cigar meanwhile."

Of course you wouldn't expect, any more than Aeson, to take such a bath every day; and no doubt moralists will come down hard on prolonged physical contact with money. The only completely convincing case against them that I have encountered is the one made by Volpone, in Ben Jonson's play. "Good morning to the day; and next, my gold!" is Volpone's charming morning devotion; and never was a lasting physical relationship to riches given a more inspiring glow, never did wealth figure so grandly as an object of reverence and as a rival to the natural order:

> *Open the shrine, that I may see my saint.*
> *Hail the world's soul, and mine! more glad than is*
> *The teeming earth to see the longed-for sun*
> *Peep through the horns of the celestial Ram,*
> *Am I, to view this splendour darkening his;*
> *That lying here, among thy other hoards,*
> *Show'st like a flame by night, or like the day*
> *Struck out of chaos, when all darkness fled*
> *Unto the centre.*

Volpone has found how to have it all ways. He loves to hoard gold and jewels, but he loves quite as passionately what gold can buy, and among the things that it can buy is the praise of being a free-handed giver. To enjoy riches to the full one positively needs a parasite—one such as Mosca, who tells Volpone:

> *You will not lie in straw, whilst moths and worms*
> *Feed on your sumptuous hangings and soft beds;*
> *You know the use of riches, and dare give now*
> *From that bright heap, to me, your poor observer. . . .*

To crown all, what acquiring wealth by his special method brings with it—so explains Volpone, stealing the ethical clothes of Engels and R. H. Tawney—is a clear social conscience:

> *I glory*
> *More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,*
> *Than in the glad possession, since I gain*
> *No common way; I use no trade, no venture;*
> *I wound no earth with ploughshares, fat no beasts*
> *To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,*
> *Oil, corn, or men, to grind them into powder:*
> *I blow no subtle glass, expose no ships*
> *To threat'nings of the furrow-faced sea. . . .*

As an argument for the innocence of money-making this is more staggering than the paradoxes of Bernard Shaw's Undershaft and the like; indeed it is not very easy to answer.

No later writer seems quite to have come up to Jonson. Clough's lines from *Dipsychus* are a nice effort, but they are weakened by a touch of Victorian duplicity:

> *As I sat at the Café I said to myself*
> *They may talk as they please about what they call pelf,*
> *They may sneer as they like about eating and drinking,*
> *But help it I cannot, I cannot help thinking*
> *How pleasant it is to have money, heigh-ho!*
> *How pleasant it is to have money.*

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I sit at my table en grand seigneur,
And when I have done, throw a crust to the poor;
Not only the pleasure itself of good living,
But also the pleasure of now and then giving:
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh-ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

They may talk as they please about what they call pelf,
And how one ought never to think of one's self,
How pleasures of thought surpass eating and drinking—
My pleasure of thought is the pleasure of thinking
How pleasant it is to have money, heigh-ho!
How pleasant it is to have money.

This is so framed that, if challenged, Clough can always claim that he is writing satire.

It is, again, not to be taken seriously when Goethe expounds the duty to acquire a large income. The truth is, he has been asked a question about Jeremy Bentham—surely, if his Excellency had lived in England, his eyes, like Bentham's, would have been opened to reform?—and, like some others, he finds the name Bentham altogether too provoking. "Do you take me for a simpleton?" he replies derisively, assuming the role of Mephistopheles.

> "You imagine that in England I would have spent my time tracking down and exposing abuses? I should have lived off them and exploited them! Had I been an English man—which, thank Heaven, is not the case—I should be a duke and a millionaire, or still better a bishop with an income of 60,000 pounds. . . . I should have lied in verse and prose for so long that the 60,000 pounds could not have eluded me. If one does not want to be crushed, one has to rise above everything, and look down from one's eminence on the crowd, which consists only of fools and imbeciles."

It is another and more serious matter when Samuel Butler pays tribute to money. The topic opens up an immensity of intellectual prospects to him. Money as art: "But, after all, is not money an art? Nay, is it not the most difficult on earth and the parent of all? And if life is short and art long, is not money still longer?" Money as a second nature: "Why cannot we be buried as eggs in neat little cells with ten or twenty thousand pounds each wrapped round us in Bank of England notes, and wake up as the sphex wasp does, to find that its papa and mamma have not only left ample provision at its elbow, but have been eaten by sparrows some weeks before it began to live consciously on its own account?" Money as religion: "It may be said to any man, 'Thou fool, this night thy money shall be required of thee'." Butler can be very inspiring on the subject, and his "musical banks" hit the Victorian church a nastier blow than did Bradlaugh or the Darwinians:

> ". . . anyone could see that the money given out at these banks was not that with which people bought their bread, meat and clothing. It was like it at first glance, and was stamped with designs that were often of great beauty; it was not, again, a spurious coinage, made with the intention that it should be mistaken for the money in actual use; it was more like a toy money, or the counters used for certain games at cards. . . . Of course everyone knew that their commercial value was *nil*, but all those who wished to be considered respectable thought it incumbent upon them to retain a few coins in their possession, and to let them be seen from time to time in their hands and purses. . . . I never could understand (neither can I quite do so now, though I begin to see better what they mean) why a single currency should not suffice them; it would seem to me as though all their dealings would have been thus greatly simplified; but I was met with a look of horror if ever I dared to hint at it. Even those who to my certain knowledge kept only just enough money at the Musical Banks to swear by, would call the other banks (where the securities really lay) cold, deadening, paralysing and the like."

Stimulated as Butler was by the subject, however, and prizing it as he did for its intellectual use-value, he was, one feels, not really on the side of money. It gave him no joy. He made much of it only because it helped him pay off various scores against life. Thus we must regard Butler as the bridge between the friends and the enemies of money.

His disciple E. M. Forster we shall certainly have to place among its enemies, and this followed inevitably from his general theory of life. For he was obsessed with the need to identify "positives"—the things that are of value in themselves, as distinct from those which are valuable for the use that can be made of them—and money is a most powerful exemplar, indeed the supreme one, of the second category. "The produce of the world has become dimmer than the channel down which it slides to us", he noted gloomily in his Commonplace Book.

The subject of money troubled him, and he gave it most earnest and intelligent attention, arriving in his own life at many rules for the handling of it. Gifts of money could be very large, but loans should be small and must be repaid with punctiliousness. As taught by Samuel Butler, he held that money, like sex, should not be hushed up. "I'm tired of these rich people who pretend to be poor, and think that it shows a nice mind to ignore the piles of money that keep their feet above the waves." So speaks Margaret Schlegel, in this his spokesman, in *Howards End.*

> "I stand each year upon six hundred pounds, and Helen upon the same, and Tibby will stand upon eight, and as fast as our pounds crumble away into the sea they are renewed—from the sea, yes, from the sea. And all our thoughts are the thoughts of six-hundred-pounders, and all our speeches."

Forster himself stood on an island (a very small island) of private income, and might otherwise perhaps have never become a novelist. The inherited income went away before long, with the decline of railway shares and other such genteel securities, but the inherited problem was not so easily got rid of; and with all his enlightened attention to money, it would sometimes lead him into snares. A rueful note in

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his Commonplace Book for 1932 records one such instance:

> "Money plays a much larger part than it should in your conversation—said Bob to me. It is true, but how to cure myself at 53? The ugly habit has crept on me. I bring myself to the front by saying jokingly that I am rich, poor, have made good terms in America, paid a lot at a restaurant; and a man who has had real worries over money rebukes me. 'A thing to use if one's got it'—I have always preached that, yet I am letting it use me, and take hold of me where I feel safest, through my sense of humour. . . . I wish I had not fallen so stupidly here. No one has ever tried to take my money away from me, to my knowledge. Above all, I wish I didn't think my references to my own income amused people; nothing will cure me of the unlovely illusion."

THERE ARE THOSE (we have come to call them "currency-cranks") who from a hatred of gold-and-silver money, with all the paradoxes that the "preciousness" of precious metal brings in its train, are prompted to reject it for some more meaningful form of credit—bills drawn upon the real and natural abundance of the earth. The Saint-Simonians thought that paper-credit and a reformed banking system would overcome the estranging nature of money and bring about the reunification of mankind; and, as we know, Ezra Pound arrived at another and less humanistic version of the same view. It strikes one as, in a way, an almost inevitable fatality that Ezra Pound, given his theories of poetry, should gravitate towards such a belief. If, like Pound, you believe in fidelity to "the thing itself" and "direct treatment of the object", the implication will be that nothing can be a substitute for any other thing, not even by the duality of metaphor; and hence the substitutional function of money, the fact that by means of it any commodity is convertible into another, must seem quite repugnant to you. This helps explain the method of the *Cantos*, in which things are brought into relationship merely by means of "rhyme", a device which respects their independent selfhood. As Hugh Kenner puts it: "Many heroes rhyme with Odysseus and a house of good stone rhymes with mountain wheat, strong flour, the mind of Agostino di Duccio, and the proportions among the plain arches of St. Hilaire in Poitiers."

It is somehow a measure of Marx that, though he was, as I suppose can hardly be denied, the supreme and most implacable enemy of money, he was not a currency-crank. This is not at all to say that he ignored the mystery-aspect of precious-metal currency and the paradoxes of its double nature, as a token, but at the same time in itself a form, of wealth. Indeed, in the *Grundrisse* especially, he explores the phenomenon of precious-metal currency with ferocious thoroughness—from the technological aspect ("one grain [of gold] can be drawn to make a 500-feet long wire and can be hammered into leaves barely 1/200,000 of an inch thick"); the alchemical ("Money as individualised exchange value and hence as wealth incarnate was what the alchemists sought; it figures in this role within the Monetary [Mercantilist] System"); to the strictly economic, where he neatly knocks

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on the head some fallacies of classical economics.

As he points out shrewdly, the consumption of gold and silver is *not* in inverse proportion to the cost of their production, as it was the orthodox thing to say, for from the outset gold and silver represent superfluity: "their use specifically represents wealth, excess, luxury, because they themselves *represent* wealth in general." Again he makes the neat observation that money, in passing through its three aspects as measure, as medium of exchange, and as international capital, comes full circle. In the first of these transformations it sheds its "precious" quality, becoming merely a symbol, but in the second it regains it, and "gold and silver reappear in exactly the same form in which they already played a role in primitive barter."

Marx's response to the mysteries and fallacies surrounding precious-metal currency is not, however, quite what you expect, and he is not prompted to see salvation in getting rid of it. To put it more generally, he is not a demythologiser. He believes that these are genuine mysteries, or at least as genuine as the world can provide: ". . . the illusion about its [precious-metal currency's] nature, i.e. the fixed insistence on one of its aspects, in the abstract, and the blindness towards the contradictions contained within it, gives it a really magical significance behind the backs of individuals." If, as the culmination to his "Chapter on Money" in the *Grundrisse*, he itemises these "contradictions" one after the other, it is with a kind of enraged desperation and not with any Voltairean hope of disposing of them, and slaying this Apollyon once and for all.

MARX'S CONCEPT of "alienation" of course, depends upon an analogy between money and religion. "As long as man is restrained by religion he can objectify his essence only by making it into an *alien* fantastic being. In the same way, when under the sway of egotistic need he can act practically and practically produce objects only by making his products and his activity subordinate to an alien substance and giving them the significance of an alien substance—money." The general drift of this, however, is not to deny religion its due awe, but rather to enhance the awesomeness of money; and when Marx, as he so often does, refers to money as a "divinity", he does so not so much in a tone of cynicism as one of fear. Money is for him a most formidable adversary, and his language grows mythological or theological whenever he touches upon it. It pleases him to find Shakespeare expressing, in *Timon of Athens*, his own deepest feeling about money: that it is a superhuman force, the inverter of worlds, and "universal confusion and exchange of all things". From its servile role, as a mere medium of circulation, money "suddenly changes into the lord and god of the world of commodities"; it scales heaven and assumes the role of "the divine existence of commodities, while they represent its [money's] earthly form."

It follows for Marx that any hope of slaying this evil deity by abandoning precious-metal currency is vain. The organised paper-credit system of the Saint-Simonians would in fact open up an even more fatal prospect for mankind, equating man's "species-being" with his credit-worthiness. The result would be "a counterfeiting of man . . . on man himself rather than on any other material . . . a self-estrangement, dehumanisation all the more *infamous* and *extreme* because its element is no longer a commodity, metal or paper, but the *moral* existence, the *social* existence, the very heart of man."

The Marxes were in life to suffer appalling indignities from money, or the lack of it, so it is nice to know that, when they were in a position to do so, they put it firmly in its place. Jenny Marx's mother gave them some money for their honeymoon, and they took it with them in a chest, leaving this open on the table in their hotel rooms, so that needy friends might take as much as they pleased.

SINCE WE ARE ON THE TOPIC of gold and silver, we may pursue it a little more generally. The point of the myth of the Golden Age, as related by Ovid, is that it was precisely the age in which gold had not yet been disturbed from its proper place—underground and out of reach of mankind. Conversely the Iron Age is the age in which gold, in the form of money, holds sway—that happy age so warmly lauded by Voltaire in "Le Mondain":

> *L'or de la terre et les trésors de l'onde,*
> *Leurs habitants et les peuples de l'air,*
> *Tout sert au luxe, aux plaisirs de ce monde.*
> *Ah! le bon temps que ce siècle de fer!*

The Ovidian myth, nevertheless, is evidently a myth about money: for to what else would the supreme value of gold, and the relative valuation of gold, silver, bronze and iron, refer? A similar paradox or prolepsis is exploited by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, when he makes Mammon take a covetous interest in gold ("admiring more/The Riches of Heaven's pavement, trod'n Gold,/Than aught divine or holy else enjoy'd/In vision beatific") before he has any motive to. The reader of Ovid and Milton is, of course, expected to interpret things in reverse and to remember that the only reason why gold should be thought the appropriate building material for Heaven, and for the princely palaces of the angelic hierarchy, is the one that weighs with earthly grandees, i.e. that nobody else would be able to afford it.

The *buried* aspect of gold, of which Ovid and Milton make so much (Milton, by another prolepsis, makes the angels expert at gold-quarrying, before gold has been hidden in the earth or indeed before there is an earth to hide it in), figures importantly in late-medieval and Renaissance monetary theory—a point well made by Michel Foucault in *Les mots et les choses*. According to this theory, as Foucault explains it, God has established a regular proportion between men's needs and the amount of treasure concealed under the earth, in the "scintillating, hidden veins where metals obscurely grow". The arrangement resembles the benevolent divine plan by which plants and animals exhibit the "marks" and similitudes which relate them to God's primordial "writing", but it has also a sinister and demonic overtone.

> "The marks of similitude, since they are a guide to knowledge, proclaim the perfection of heaven; the signs of

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monetary exchange, since they satisfy desire, draw upon the black, dangerous and accursed scintillation of metal. An ambiguous scintillation, for it reproduces in the depths of the earth the one which sings in the height of the night sky: it represents as it were an inverted promise of happiness, and since metal resembles stars, the knowledge of these perilous treasures is at the same time a general knowledge of the world."

One cannot help feeling a certain grudge against gold, which makes decent enough false teeth and used to make good pen-nibs but has not otherwise been noticeably useful to the world. Moreover, the gasp with which some people greet the sight of the stuff, in any quantity, is certainly irritating. One felt this at the *Tutenkhamen's Treasure* exhibition at the British Museum some years ago—a very ancient-Egyptian experience, moreover, for this was the beginning of new-style exhibition-technique, and the spectators were, slave-like, whipped on past the large golden objects through darkened tunnels, with no permission to loiter. One cannot help remembering, though, that gold in its symbolic aspect is not necessarily put to vulgar uses and may be put to delicate ones, in which it seems an apt symbol of the sacred. Ruskin, who was rumbustious and rancorous about money, and indeed made some excellent jokes about it, was in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* tentative and compunctious in his attitude towards gold. His moralising, and Ovidian, approach to it is, indeed, very appealing.

"Whitewash . . . is not to be blamed as a falsity. It shows itself for what it is, and asserts nothing of what is beneath it. Gilding has become, from its frequent use, equally innocent. It is understood for what it is, a film merely, and is therefore, allowable to any extent: I do not say expedient: it is one of the most abused means of magnificence we possess, and I much doubt whether any use we ever make of it, balances that loss of pleasure, which, from the frequent sight and perpetual suspicion of it, we suffer in the contemplation of any thing that is verily of gold. I think gold was meant to be seldom seen, and to be admired as a precious thing; and I sometimes wish that truth should so far literally prevail as that all should be gold that glittered, or rather that nothing should glitter that was not gold. Nevertheless, Nature herself does not dispense with such semblance, but uses light for it; and I have too great a love for old and saintly art to part with its burnished field, or radiant nimbus; only it should be used with respect, and to express magnificence, or sacredness, and not in lavish vanity, or in sign painting."

THIS SEEMS a convenient point to turn our thoughts to social history. The "frequent sight and perpetual suspicion" of golden things that Ruskin speaks of is a significant British trait. The Victorian British became increasingly irritated with the Louis XV style in furniture, that is to say with furniture smothered in gilding. A social-historical generalisation dimly suggests itself here, to the effect that the British, even quite unpolitical ones, have

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acquired an uneasy conscience about money, in a way that the French have never quite done; and that many social phenomena in Britain are an expression of this.

As to the French, my reasons are really very sketchy. But could Voltaire's career as a supremely successful speculator in army contracts and money-lender to the great be imaginable in quite the same shape in an English writer? I do not mean that it passed without comment in France, or that his enemies did not make unkind remarks about his "rapacity"; but one does not get the impression that he was blamed for "bad taste", as he might even then have been in England. (Candide's eagerness to get away from the idyllic El Dorado, where gold is not more valued than pebbles, is one of the nicest strokes of all in Voltaire's novel.)

Can one, again, imagine Dickens, though certainly a good man at a literary bargain, approaching money with the innocent directness of Balzac, who was constantly dreaming of *digging it up*? Balzac would employ clairvoyants to look for buried treasure. He claimed to know where Toussaint L'Ouverture had hidden his booty after the Haiti uprising, and spoke of it so convincingly to Théophile Gautier and Jules Sandeau that they were ready to go out and buy pick-axes, charter a brig, and set off instantly in search of it. In 1838, exhausted by the rewriting of *César Birotteau* and dreaming of some easier method of earning money, he set off alone to the mountains of Sardinia, intent upon reopening an abandoned ancient-Roman silver-mine—actually a very sound scheme, only as it happened he had been forestalled. (It is instructive to compare him with Goethe, who went in for silver-mining too, and with no less heated imaginings, but in his case they were of a public-spirited nature.)

A couple of faint indications from Proust will be all I have to add on this French side. Odette, when married to Swann, with his "English" good taste, gives up the gilt trellis on which she used to train her indoor chrysanthemums, and no longer does she strew her mantelpiece with gilt pasteboard "*louis d'or*" (though admittedly she had abandoned these latter somewhat earlier, on the advice of an unnamed "man of taste"). It is, again, somehow suggestive of a time-lag in financial sophistication between France and Britain, and a less developed shamefacedness about money among the French, that when an enormously distinguished physician, recommended by the Duc de Guermantes, is brought in to attend Marcel's grandmother, his fee is slipped into his hand there and then.

> "He did not appear to have noticed it, and we asked ourselves for a moment whether we had actually given it to him, so much conjurer's skill did he use in making it disappear, without the slightest loss to his dignity."

I AM ON FIRMER GROUND when it comes to Britain. The English, from the early 18th century, when they took such a lead in commerce and in the development of financial institutions, tended, as we know, to be looked upon as a very odd people by their European neighbours. It was amazing to these that in England a creditor could actually have a debtor arrested in the street, without warning—though Defoe, who suffered under the system, claimed it to be the indispensable basis of England's commercial supremacy, and the lack of it to be one of the main reasons for Scotland's poverty.

Some sense that they were indeed rather odd over these matters would appear to have sunk deep into the English consciousness and returned to the surface in a variety of disguised forms. By the mid-Victorian period, theories of "good taste" were overwhelmingly concerned with money, in a negative sense—with not being ostentatious with money, not talking about money, not paying attention to how much money other people had. With this as its soil, the theory of "the gentleman" flourished more spectacularly than ever before, and in a way peculiar to Britain (I wonder what foreigners make of *The Last Chronicle of Barset* in which such complex propositions are put forward about gentlemanliness in relation to money?). As a system of thought, moreover, it was not rigid and could accommodate various revisions. Thus, what is "good taste" seen from one aspect, can seem hypocrisy from another, necessitating in time a revisionary "good-taste bad taste" like Forster's, according to which the "bad-taste" or ungentlemanly thing to do is to hush money up.

We seem to have the key here to one or two puzzles. It is, for instance, a fact worth a good deal of pondering that when a Briton joins a Pall Mall club, he thereby gives up his time-honoured right to freedom of speech; for he is explicitly forbidden to discuss "business" on the club's premises, and the club servants are encouraged to eavesdrop and report offenders. Again, so far as I know, no one has written a social history of the City—which, if you come to think of it, is an amazing gap in British historiography. (It is paralleled, on a smaller scale, by the fact that books about the Indian raj talk exclusively about soldiers and civil servants and never about businessmen.) These are oddities which, it would seem, are only explainable by some inhibition.

We may see a connection here with the fact that British historians, though very good at perceiving the relativity of present-day economic, political, and religious conceptions, tend to attribute an absoluteness to the social conceptions which they have imbibed at their mother's breast and hence to impose on the 17th and 18th centuries social notions that came in with bowler hats and Lloyd George's Insurance Act. They might thus easily be unconsciously influenced by an Edwardian tabu on "business", as a socially disreputable subject. It is certainly a strange spectacle to see how W. R. Parker, in his biography of Milton, deals with the fact, of which he loves to remind us, that Milton's father was a "scrivener". "We may be sure that John's childhood was as happy as a comfortable environment and kindly middle-class parents could make it." ". . . better things were wonderfully within reach of many families in the bustling, forward-looking England of Queen Elizabeth. By working hard and exercising thrift, a poor man might achieve great wealth, and sometimes if his services to the state were sufficient, and if the right people were favourable, he might be rewarded with a knighthood, or even higher honours." The first social group of which the boy Milton became conscious was "composed

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of hard-working, pious business-men, and their families. . . . These were the kind of thrifty, ambitious people who were beginning to send their sons to the universities." However, ". . . the old scrivener had made an investment, and he expected eventually the return of his principal."

We seem to be reading a novel by Galsworthy; and we ask ourselves what is so "thrifty" about parents who have their ten-year-old son painted by an eminent portrait-painter and a little later encourage him not to earn his living but to become a poet? At this point, of course, some historians will adopt a fall-back position and say this is *parvenu* display and an aping of the aristocracy. We have here the familiar implication that an historian is by definition a lord, and that to see society from the top is to see it truly. The "privilege" of the "scientific observer" turns out remarkably similar to social privilege.

I WILL ADD one further example. One of the more significant paradoxes in "purely social" thought in Britain, dominant for about a century though now in decline, was that money was an altogether "low", affair, yet that on the other hand one of the most socially smart things for a young man to do (quite as smart as joining a Guards regiment) was to go in for stockbroking. It is as though the sordid material was only safe in the hands of the impeccably gentlemanly. Thus stockbroking, from being a technical mystery, became a social one, and what went on within the charmed circle was something that outsiders would not be invited to know.

There are commentators who will want to soften this paradox and say that finance was never regarded as "low" like trade; but I think this may be a rationalisation and that some such innovation in social theory did take place—at that great moment for social innovation, the immediate post-Reform-Bill period. It may perhaps give us a little help in dating it that, in Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?*, the well-connected young George Vavasour becomes a stockbroker, though Trollope's account of this is distinctly equivocal. Social life, like sexual life, seems to have a way of organising itself round paradoxes so extreme and perfect that they become invisible, and I am inclined to think that this was one of them.

Subversion & Stubbornness

On Culture & its Critics—By A. S. Byatt

IN MAY THIS YEAR Fay Weldon smilingly told a distinguished deputation of Russian writers that literature was, of course, essentially subversive. I imagine that remark would meet with no serious dissent in most literature departments in this country; students *know* that literature is subversive, as they no longer know that it is a criticism of life, let alone "that which makes for righteousness". It sounded more provocative in its context: the Russian visitors might believe both in necessary revolution and in the virtues of writing to reinforce the values of the society they partly represented, but not in subversion *per se*. Last year, defending *The Good Terrorist* on television, Doris Lessing, questioned about having betrayed the proper aspirations and indignation of the Left, claimed passionately that our Western culture was a very fragile, a very vulnerable thing, built up with difficulty and easy to destroy with speed and fury.

Lionel Trilling tells us that the idea of society as a kind of person with authority over us arose "at about the time of Rousseau", after which men began to live out their lives in relation to this autonomous character and personality rather than in relation to God or neighbours or material circumstance. Perhaps the moral desirability of subversion came with this hypostasis, which can be both reinforced and undermined by the Freudian story of the hierarchy of parts of the soul, and the forging of the self in opposition to the Father. Recent literary criticism has certainly, with increasing ingenuity and obsession, concerned itself with the problems of authority in every sense of that word.

Literary criticism in France, England, and America is still very much a response to the subversive, revolutionary and anarchic events of the late 1960s. During that decade and during the 1970s there was remarkable in general academic American criticism a new tentativeness, an awareness of overthrown authority, and a deep anxiety about the value, to students or the world, of what was being discussed and of academic discussion itself.

Lionel Trilling had moved from 1930s Marxism through 1950s liberalism to a new pessimistic conservatism. Mark Krupnick, in *Lionel Trilling and the Fate of Cultural Criticism*[1] charts, tactfully and with some moral passion, Trilling's shifts of emphasis and position over his life. Krupnick begins by deprecating the fact that the ferment and excitement of deconstruction, semiotics, and Marxist and feminist theory in the universities have gone along with the disappearance of critics of the calibre of Edmund Wilson or Trilling himself, who saw themselves primarily as "writers" and "were preoccupied with American life and American culture as a whole." Krupnick is not wholly satisfied with

[1] *Lionel Trilling and the Fate of Cultural Criticism*. By MARK KRUPNICK. Northwestern University Press, $21.95, paper $10.95.

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Trilling as a cultural guru; he admits to having felt personal bitterness over Trilling's failure to provide him with leadership and direction over the Viet Nam War. But he is judicious and delicate about Trilling's successive formulations of his vision of self and culture (which he sees essentially as a move from the radical to the conservative), and his preoccupation with the puzzling concept of "gratuitously chosen selfhood" and the degree to which "culture" was or wasn't a pervasive influence.

For Trilling, the essential impulse of art, since the end of the 18th century, had been "to liberate the individual from the tyranny of his culture in the environmental sense and to permit him to stand beyond it in an autonomy of perception and judgment." Jane Austen's moral realism picked its intelligent way between the illusions fostered by civilised manners and the truths upheld by them; Keats was the opposing self, the artist as hero; Freud too was heroic in his restless and strenuous ambition to probe beyond the appearances of cultural behaviour. Professor Krupnick prefers Trilling's earlier essays in *The Liberal Imagination* and *The Opposing Self* to his more riddling and doubtfully detached scepticism in *Beyond Culture* and *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Yet these later works illuminated for many of us a central paradox of the whole concept of the necessary subversiveness of literature. What happens when there is a large quantity of general agreement that "the culture" is stultifying and that authenticity of life lies in subversion? Do we not get another orthodoxy? Another set of unquestioned values? The later Trilling was distressed by the ease and glee with which his students flocked to share what he claimed he had experienced as the pain and danger of contemplating the dark and forbidden.

> "I asked them to look into the Abyss, and both dutifully and gladly, they have looked into the Abyss and the Abyss has greeted them with the grave courtesy of all objects of serious study, saying 'Interesting, am I not. . . . Have it well in mind that a knowledge of me contributes materially to your being whole, or well-rounded men.'"[2]

Elsewhere he quotes a student who said, "Suppose a man is paranoid—that is, he thinks he is right and other people are wrong."

The self, the individual who was at the centre of Trilling's moral universe, and who was the centre of responsibility and vitality, was devalued, even denigrated, by the new morals of what he came to call the "adversary culture"—resolutely egalitarian, communal, anti-hierarchical, cheerfully random and plural in its directions of attention and belief. Trilling was inclined to attribute to these new forms of life that "weightlessness" Nietzsche prophesied in human life after the death of God. His sense that there was value in the strenuous individual self was increasingly located in man's relation to his biological nature. Freud, he claimed, had assumed an ineluctable and immutable biological human nature, unaffected by culture, liberating as a concept, in its harsh quiddity.

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[2] Lionel Trilling, *Beyond Culture* (1965).

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Throughout his work, he used as a touchstone Forster's "Death destroys a man; the idea of death saves him." The idea of death informs the most powerful of Trilling's appeals to our nature. Against it our sense of self springs into shape and life. It is there in Wordsworth's "eye/That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality" in Trilling's essay on the great "Ode"; it is there in his recurring praise of Keats's heroic death, rejecting books, yet caring to be among the English poets; it is there in his persisting return to the Freudian riddles of the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the idea that "the goal of all life is death, and every organism wishes only to die after its own fashion." It is an ingredient of the strong pessimism Nietzsche admired in the Greeks, and Trilling in Nietzsche. A corollary of a moral obsession with endings is that lives, and art, tend to be seen as narrative, as shaped in time. The Freudian analysis tells a story; so too does Trilling's vision of the acquisition and the final dissolution of selfhood.

TRILLING'S SELF was a very American self. Despite his preponderant interest in European literature, and his comparative lack of attention to indigenous works of art, he had the sense of metaphysical solitude that informs American literature. His novel *The Middle of the Journey* (1947) is informed by a Forsterian irony and the Forsterian death-sentiment, but in the end it more resembles that strange and original work *The Blithedale Romance*, a set of moral dilemmas enacted by a group of theorists in a society of manufactured manners. Ronald A. Sharp is also an American, and he has written an elegant and idiosyncratic book about *Friendship and Literature: Spirit and Form*.[3]

This work is a delicate plea on behalf of civilised forms that the energetic are engaged in subverting or unmasking. Sharp detaches friendship from the strenuous sexual interrogation of recent psychoanalytic theory; he points out that the short-circuit to "self-knowledge" offered by the authenticating "encounter group" is no substitute for the traditions, rituals, reticences of older forms. He is on Doris Lessing's side of the crude opposition of values I began with. His chosen texts are *Cranford*, W. H. Auden's later poems, his own ritual jokes with his oldest friend, and finally *The Merchant of Venice*, where he offers us a wise and patient vision of the relations between Bassanio and Antonio, the giving and receiving of gifts and obligations.

Being an American, he quotes de Tocqueville's observation that "men living in democratic ages do not readily comprehend the utility of forms" and deplores, civilly, American "fascination with spontaneity and change". "Overwhelmingly, in recent years, our tendency has been to try to circumvent, even to explode forms", he writes, and states categorically that "friendship cannot flourish at all outside of forms." His thoughtful book might be seen as part of the same movement away from the adversary culture as Krupnick's, a conservatism not strident but careful, a desire for shared meanings.

TRILLING OFTEN CLAIMED that the self defined its nature in terms not only of its own culture but of "the other culture"—Matthew Arnold's Hellenism, Henry James's ambivalent European interest, the American English departments' interest in *English* literature. To turn from him to William Empson is to encounter a mind no less strenuous, but one both gleefully at home in the culture it inherited and able to find vantage points from which to consider other cultures. Rereading *Seven Types of Ambiguity* and *Some Versions of Pastoral*, now reissued by Chatto and Windus (along with *The Structure of Complex Words* and the *Collected Poems*),[4] one is aware of iconoclasm and subtlety, rigorous scrutiny and, very importantly, sheer pleasure in the uses of literary language in society. But not, I think, of anything that would want to be called subversive.

Empson is sharp with nonsense and ingenious in his detection of multifarious meanings, but he perceives forms as endlessly interesting and lively, whether they be genres, grammatical forms, or civilised habits. Pastoral, for instance, he sees as an elegant way of "putting the complex into the simple", an agreed convention whereby much can be implied and understood. This is not stultifying; it is illuminating—"in itself a great help to the concentration needed for poetry."

In his essays on Falstaff, or the varying perceptions of the Trojan war available to the whole audience of *Troilus and Cressida*, all of whom might understand parts of the complex message, he shows himself alert to the different possible intelligent readers, or watchers. He writes always, whether deploying erudition or mocking muscle-bound critics, as though the business of reading and writing were one, and immensely lively. An example (from *Seven Types of Ambiguity*):

> "It would be foolish to deny that *Titus Andronicus* is a bad and nasty play but the essential technical skill of Shakespeare is already strong in it; his power, that is, to stop churning out a play and think instead 'Why is anybody interested in this plot?' and then throw the answer naked on the stage."

This is exactly the right thing to say about the writing of *Titus*; and the most interesting. Another example, this time from the 1964 "Hunt the Symbol" in which he attacks S. L. Bethell for saying, of the banal reported temple-visit in *The Winter's Tale*, that the character Cleomenes expresses "the familiar mystical annihilation of sense in the presence of God", and adds:

> "No parody could invent anything better than the word 'familiar' at the end; the gross impudence of it is so perfectly in keeping."

Empson's own phrase "gross impudence" is itself patrician, shocking, and horribly accurate. He knew exactly how to measure the moral failure and the failure of taste involved in that word "familiar". His placing of it assumes a cultural

[3] *Friendship and Literature: Spirit and Form*. By RONALD A. SHARP. Duke University Press, £16.95, $23.95.

[4] *Seven Types of Ambiguity. Collected Poems*. By WILLIAM EMPSON. Hogarth Press, £8.50, £6.95. *Some Versions of Pastoral. The Structure of Complex Words*. By WILLIAM EMPSON. Chatto and Windus, £8.50, £10.00.

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milieu and certainty that are of, or appeal to, a past order.

Empson showed some but not great concern as to whether his new analytical methods of criticism might destroy poems for readers. Mostly he thought, trusting the culture, that we should forget the details of his procedure but retain the awareness it fostered of the nature and functioning of language. He was less sanguine about the stultifying effects of scholarship. As he says in his newly reissued *Essays on Shakespeare*:[5]

> "Consider the fact that the books about *Hamlet* would alone completely fill a sheer house. I am rather interested in the reflection that this already defeats what is called 'scholarship' because nobody has read them all. If he did, he would only be a monster."

This was written in 1953, when the quantity of writing about Shakespeare was less daunting than it is now. There is something very dispiriting about interviewing prospective students of English who have dipped into this sheer houseful; their language is not conventional in any saving sense, but secondhand in a wholly distressing one; Shakespeare becomes a tiger smothered in cream, his lineaments barely visible. Empson's Shakespearean criticism retains its grip on us, its authority, not only because he wrote well, but because he wrote about Shakespeare writing, making decisions about words and structures, thinking passionately.

*Germaine Greer has written an introduction to Shakes*peare[6] in a series (Past Masters) which looks unpromising, and occasionally through her voice we hear flat echoes of things said again and again before. But mostly she responds sharply and directly to the plays themselves, and to the man, discussing his poetics, ethics, politics, teleology and sociology clearly and helpfully. I'd give this book to an ex-A level student without fearing I was putting films of wordstuff between her and the task and pleasure of reading the plays.

WILLIAM EMPSON MIGHT WELL be seen as a precursor of modern critical theory. His sense of the ambiguities of poetic language might have foreshadowed the modern desire for endless proliferated puns and meanings, polysemy on principle. *The Structure of Complex Words* was written by a mathematician who knew what theory was and by a poet aware of the contribution that linguistics could make. And yet between his work and the intensely lively theoretical world described by Christopher Prendergast in *The Order of Mimesis*[7] is a yawning gap of what might be called "suspicion" if we don't revert to "subversion".

Prendergast's undertaking, in the context of current French literary theory and 19th-century French fiction is to examine

[5] *Essays on Shakespeare*. By WILLIAM EMPSON. Cambridge University Press, £25.00, paper £7.95; $39.50, paper $12.95.

[6] *Shakespeare*. By GERMAINE GREER. Oxford University Press, £9.95, paper £2.95.

[7] *The Order of Mimesis: Balzac, Stendhal, Nerval, Flaubert*. By CHRISTOPHER PRENDERGAST. Cambridge University Press, £27.50, $39.50.

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the distrust or disparagement of the project of "realistic" representation of the world, of the pleasure of recognition, of mimesis. The critics examined by Prendergast tend to see narrative realism in Jacques Derrida's terms as the exercise of power, or authority, on behalf of the culture by a narrative voice that *polices*—"the narrative voice is the voice of a subject recounting . . . knowing who he is, where he is, and what he is and what he is talking about. . . . In this sense all organised narration is 'a matter for the police'."

Discussing *vraisemblance*, Prendergast approvingly quotes John Bayley's adaptation of the notion of "pastoral" to realistic works of art he values somewhat less than more surprising and freer ones. "By pastoral", writes Bayley, "I mean the principle of making everything in a work of art characteristic." he says of Eugénie Grandet that she is predictable because typical: "we shall always find her doing the right thing."[8] And the right thing, according to certain kinds of Marxism, and to certain kinds of related deconstructionism, is right because it is dictated by the authority of the ideology of the dominant culture.

Balzac had a simple idea of reality, according to this theory, and found what he was conditioned to find. Prendergast does not say, though Bayley does, that this use of "pastoral" is adapted from Empson—whose idea of it is more all-embracing and also more subtle. Empson saw pastoral destroyed by the Puritanism of post-Reformation England. "It takes a general belief as harsh and unreal as this to make the polite pretence of pastoral seem necessarily absurd", he wrote. But he saw pastoral as a pleasing and instructive understanding between writer and reader. He understood and partly shared an ancient hedonism; not for him the strenuous search for authenticity of being, free of culture, which was mapped by the Trilling who had documented "The Fate of Pleasure". Prendergast writes under the aegis or perhaps shadow of the Barthes who rejected pleasure, along with defunct classical realism, in favour of a mental souk where all images and concepts floated freely, to be enjoyed. There are puritanical elements in Barthes's pursuit of *jouissance* and certainly in Derrida's questioning of all our received concepts and cultural codes. They can even be seen as "harsh and unreal", and Prendergast does see them so, though he also understands intimately their power, their real strength—and yes, their authority.

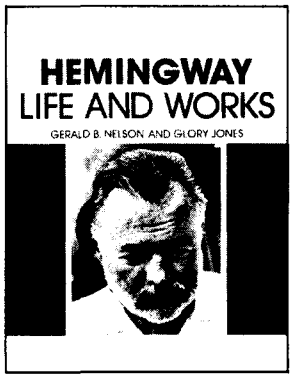
I DON'T HAVE ROOM to do justice to the tact and intellectual grip with which Prendergast mediates between the French theorists he admires and the 19th-century writers to whom he wants to do justice. His book is excellent, never facile, often witty, impeccably illustrated. He encloses four analytic sections—on Balzac, Stendhal, de Nerval and Flaubert—between two sections on the nature of mimesis.

The first, "Poison, Nausea, Health", examines Plato's hostility to imitation, Barthes's claim that the conventions of representative art are now superfluous and represent "bad faith" and complicity with the unthinking culture, and a view of mimesis as cognition, based on Aristotle and Ricoeur. Prendergast does not make the mistake of claiming that Balzac, or even Stendhal, was "modern", realising rightly that such claims make nonsense of the term. But he does show that Balzac's conservatism and his awareness of the *difficulty* of representing his world are more interesting and complex than has been allowed lately. (He is less successful in presenting a Nerval who is not a structure based on current ideas about psychology, narrative, and rhetoric.) And in his accounts of the critical and even legal opposition to the innovations of Stendhal and Flaubert he does show how real a police function the culture exercised.

Mathilde de la Mole could not have loved Julien Sorel, because this was not characteristic of noble young women, not *vraisemblable*, indeed socially impossible and therefore bad art. Flaubert was put on trial for scandalising the public and its authorities with his depiction of an adultery in which Emma "*retrouvait toutes les platitudes du mariage.*" But Prendergast shows us also that Flaubert the scourge of the cliché, the compiler of dictionaries of *bêtises* and *idées reçues* can profitably be read as having his commonplaces both ways. That is, Emma's romantic gestures, or Frédéric's emotions in *L'Education Sentimentale* are banal "quotations" from the culture, precursors of Nathalie Sarraute's blind tropisms. They are also true and real and moving, the "common places" where our experiences meet. They are both subversive *and* celebratory.

Prendergast's last section, "Mimesis, A Matter for the

[8] John Bayley, *Tolstoy and the Novel* (1966).



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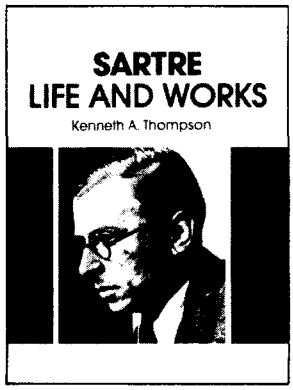

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Police?", deals with what has been seen as the artificial tyranny of plots, and with such matters as Barthes's statement that even sentence-structure is hierarchic and repressive—"it implies subjections, subordinations. . . ." When syntax itself can be called "fascist", one can forgive Prendergast for feeling called to defend Erich Auerbach's humanism and respect for Western cultural history from that charge. Prendergast describes the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Guattari, according to which all our experience is filtered through signs which denote territories which imply the rules of despotic régimes. Paranoia is our natural condition, in this view; the answer lies in subverting all norms of communication, dissolving the notion of "standard" language into plural patois, grunts, body-gestures.

This is indeed a new orthodoxy of paranoia, and Prendergast, who is good on paradoxes, gives it its run, and shows us how it must solidify into a new régime itself. His own cautious preference is for Wittgenstein's vision of life as "language-games" and "forms of life", interrelated but obeying diverse rules within a plurality of forms. And he likes Paul Ricoeur's emphasis on plot as cognition through time; the Family Romance, or the remorseless biological move from beginning to end being indeed a necessary function of all our experience.

Which brings us back to Trilling, Trilling's Freud, and the idea of death's saving us. I would add that culture is both given and acquired in time—we are indeed limited, directed, and conditioned by it, but we do also consciously treat with it, and as we grow older it becomes something known and lived, as well as opposing, inhibiting or threatening. Balzac saw it as fragile because he had experience of real revolution and social anarchy. (So also perhaps does Doris Lessing.) Perhaps we all come to see it as fragile as we take account of the extent, the particularity, and the inevitable limits of our individual relations with it.

The limits paradoxically become more apparent towards the end, which Trilling thought shaped the whole. Wordsworth in his poetic manifesto lyrically deplored "things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed." Empson, in *Sonnet*, claims robustly:

> *A more heartening thing about the cultures of man*
> *Is their appalling stubbornness. . . .*

If he is right, it is indeed heartening.

Other Virtues

Joseph Conrad's Letters—By MICHAEL THORPE

VOLUME 2 of the eight-part *Collected Letters*[1] continues one of Conrad's most absorbing tales: of the struggles of a genuine writer's life, the torments of creation, self-doubt and correction, the striving for acceptance, then after brief moments of triumph the emptiness after the act, waiting upon another. Conrad was, literally, writing for his life—chasing magazine deadlines, selling or mortgaging unwritten works, committing himself to impossible tasks, as with his commissioned albatross, *The Rescue*, whose laboured composition dominates this period, though it would not be published before 1919. His goal, "bread and peace", is years away.

One thinks constantly in reading of the waste, of what even greater work might have been done with a modicum of financial security. Precious time and effort were expended, not only on *The Rescue*, but on those Ford (Hueffer) brainchildren, *The Inheritors* (1901) and *Romance* (1903). Both potboilers really, though Conrad seems to have tried to convince himself and others that they were something more; certainly he indulges in them his shorebound nostalgia for romance, without the Marlovian distancing of "Youth". The Fourth Dimensionists of *The Inheritors* might better have been donated as an idea to Wells, with whom Conrad exchanged mutual admiration, while *Romance* contains too much fine writing, mostly Conrad's, for its genre. There the potentially complex contradictions of the anti-English fanatic O'Brien, the sporadic analysis by the romantic hero, John Kemp, of his "exalted and selfish devotion" to Seraphina sort oddly with stock melodrama. We can discern what upset Ford when Conrad's letter on *The Inheritors* to Edward Garnett (pp. 256-57) was published in 1928—that the most interesting writing in both novels is Conrad's. *The Inheritors*, which Conrad claims Ford took seriously, and he saw as "a skit upon the political novel", foreshadows in places the grotesque and farcical elements of *The Secret Agent*.

These Ford-inspired works brought neither the hoped-for popularity nor financial relief: more and more Conrad had to sustain morale upon the artist's "saving truth" whose meaning lay in "endeavour as apart from success"—a quotation from a passage which, ironically, Garnett had persuaded him to delete from the original *Nigger* Preface (*Letters, Vol. 1*, pp. 377-8). Yet, "my reputation grows, though popularity remains behind" (p. 56). He becomes

[1] *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad. Volume Two: 1898-1902*. Edited by FREDERICK R. KARL and LAURENCE DAVIES. Cambridge University Press, £27.50, $44.50.

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established as artist by the works of his right hand, tumbling out during this period, though we learn less than we would like about their conception and composition: *Heart of Darkness*, "Youth", *Lord Jim*, "The End of the Tether", "Typhoon". He complains he has no "breathing time", but is seized by inspiration no less than by necessity. The collaboration with Ford might have been expected to yield material profit, but it was in those, as he told W. E. Henley, where he reserved "the right to descend into my own private little hell" that the real work went on. They flowed from his very core, at white heat, struck out quickly or growing irresistibly like *Lord Jim*, the only setback when the whole middle section of *The End*, all ready for *Blackwoods*, went up in a conflagration caused by an exploding oil-lamp. These marvellous years brought him discerning unbiased reviews and the private tribute of men he respected: in addition to Edward Garnett, his early mentor and constant supporter, he is encouraged by Wells, Henry James, Galsworthy, and Hugh Clifford, whose experienced insight into Conrad's Far East is won over from initial criticism of *Almayer's Folly* to strong and perceptive enthusiasm for *Heart of Darkness* and "Youth". Through all fluctuating emotion Conrad knows that "I am read for my quality and cannot regard anything else."

Though popularity eludes him, and though he laments that "all my art has become artfulness in exploiting agents and publishers", even playing exasperatedly with the notion of returning to the sea, Conrad never at bottom doubts that art's distinctive quality. Clearly it throve upon his inner contradictions. The sea stories, all experienced, he grasped as his own uniquely (p.109, to W. E. Henley); in part, they are through re-creation a means of escape from a beleaguered, shorebound life, in part a means to express—"conception" being more vital than "plot"—those famous "few ideas", notably of fidelity. At war with the simplicity of this ethic, as Conrad the creator knows, and Captain Whalley his creature (like many who follow him in Conrad's fiction) is doomed to discover, is man's boundless capacity for self-deception. What price fidelity if "all is illusion"? The answer, for Conrad's art, is fidelity to the whole truth: responding to Clifford's criticism of *Lord Jim*, he comments ruefully, ". . . I have always to struggle with a moral horror of some sort. It looks to be my choice but it may only be my fate." Among several fine credos in these letters is Conrad's apologia to *The New York Times* "Saturday Review", inspired by that journal's notice of *Lord Jim* (2 August 1901):

> "Fiction, at the point of development at which it has arrived, demands from the writer a spirit of scrupulous abnegation. The only legitimate basis of creative work lies in the courageous recognition of all the irreconcilable antagonisms that make our life so enigmatic, so burdensome, so fascinating, so dangerous, so full of hope. They exist! And this is the only fundamental truth of fiction. Its recognition must be critical in its nature, inasmuch that in its character it may be joyous, it may be sad; it may be angry with revolt, or submissive in resignation. The mood does not matter. It is only the writer's self-forgetful fidelity to his sensations that matters. But, whatever light he flashes on it, the fundamental truth remains, and it is only in its name that the barren struggle of contradictions assumes the dignity of moral strife going on ceaselessly to a mysterious end—with our consciousness powerless but concerned sitting enthroned like a melancholy parody of eternal wisdom above the dust of the contest."

What faith, and yet what scepticism! Only James among Conrad's contemporaries could define his art with such authority. A dignified (one may in Conrad's case add aristocratic) sense of his calling is felt in those letters where, while disclaiming critical powers, he judges the work of friends and fellow writers: Galsworthy (urged to recognise that scepticism is "the tonic" of life and art), Garnett and Cunninghame Graham, Arnold Bennett (who puts too much faith in "realism" and logic), and the egregious John Buchan (an "unspeakable impostor").

As with his art, there is a constant integrity in Conrad's dealings with publishers, agents and friends. He was fortunate in that the stressful conflict with Fisher Unwin was succeeded, in these years, by a sympathetic and generous relationship with William Blackwood, who published much of his best work and receives his due of gratitude. Nevertheless, Conrad is prepared to test this association by urging Blackwood to consider Galsworthy's and, more riskily, Edward Garnett's work for publication. Whether Conrad truly felt as much enthusiasm for their writing or Cunninghame Graham's and others to whom he was close as he professes one doubts, but such judgments are delicate and Conrad picks his way, all told, with considerable frankness. Most impressive are, in 1902, the almost impassioned defences to which he feels driven by the impatient strictures he finally suffers from both William Blackwood (perhaps influenced by his harder-headed nephew George) and his agent, J. B. Pinker, who lectures him on slowness of composition. The latter, dated 8 January 1902—an early example from 1,200 to Pinker (almost all previously unpublished)—is a proud self-defence, "sincerity for sincerity"; and it is to Pinker's credit that he swallowed it and stood by Conrad:

> "Pray do not write to me as if I were a fool blundering in the dark. There are other virtues than punctuality. Have you the slightest idea of what I am trying for? Of what is my guiding principle which I follow in anxiety, and poverty, and daily and unremitting toil of my very heart. Come, my dear fellow, I am not one of your 25-year-old geniuses you have in your pocket, or one of your saleable people who drive three serials abreast. I am another kind of person. If you don't want the bother of my stuff saddled with my other imperfections tell me to go to the devil. That won't offend me and I'll go as soon as ever you had your money back. But don't address me as if I were a man lost in sloth, ignorance or folly. Were you as rich as Croesus and as omnipotent as all the editors rolled into one I would not let such a tone pass without resenting it in the most outspoken manner. And don't write to me of

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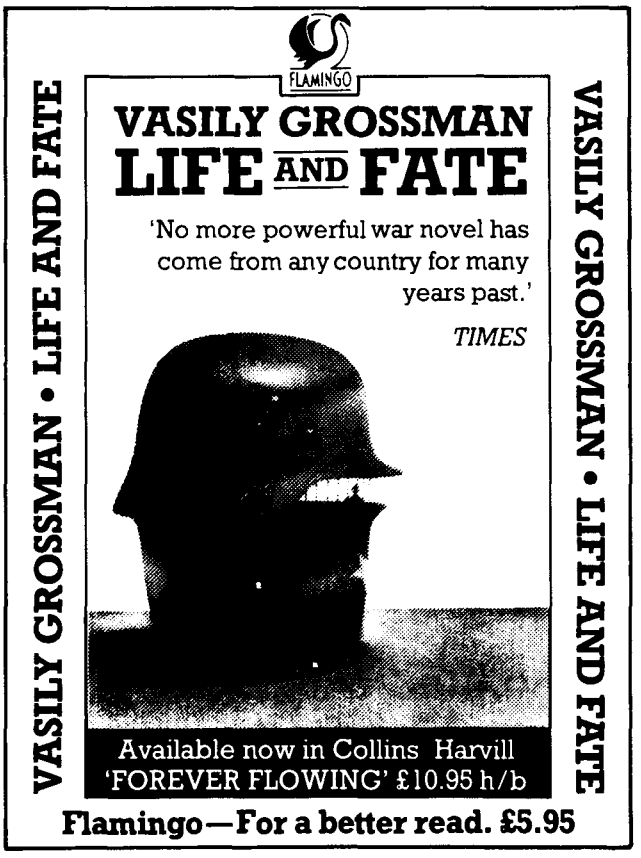
failure, confound it! because you and I have very different notions of failure. It is an impertinence if you want to know the name for it. And I am willing to let the future judge whether the name does apply."

THE AMPLE CONTENTS of this volume have had to be sought hitherto in a score of books and many journals, in English and French, published over the past 60 years. Through them read in sequence we begin, as far as one can expect, to see Conrad whole, in a text clear, readable, not pedantically clogged.[2]

What "kind of person" is he in the private life, on which we expect letters to throw some light? Most positively, a devoted friend: who finds energy and application to further his fellow writers' fortunes even when his own are shaky; quick to relieve in trouble, as in his sympathy and efforts on Cora Crane's behalf after Stephen's untimely death; frank and open in all his dealings, though these too often involved the need, humiliating to so proud a man, to dun friends and publishers. His self-confessed "Polish" vein of melancholy, his scepticism, essential perhaps to the artist but liable to undermine the personal life, are a constant dark undertone, though kept in check when writing to such vulnerable correspondents as Aniela Zagórska. It continues to be indulged, however (as in Vol. 1), in his letters to R. B. Cunninghame Graham, whose constitution he may well have judged could stand it—and whose democrat's "illusion" of "international fraternity" piqued his conviction of moral relativity. If he applauds Graham's cutting exposure of imperial racial arrogance in "Niggers" (printed in *The Ipané*, 1899), when it comes to the Boer War his Polish self sympathises with the Boers' struggle for independence, while his partiality for British "liberty" puts him on the side of the "Celto-Saxon", as Graham ironically dubs him. Marlowe also, in *Heart of Darkness*, seeks to make fine distinctions between imperialisms.

In the letters to Graham and, occasionally, to Garnett and Sanderson, Conrad runs through the gamut of negative feeling—airy cynicism, depression and despair—but early on, with the birth of his son Borys, a humorous and affectionate acknowledgment of overriding human claims enters in. A typically dark disquisition on the everlasting machine and the universe of mud, on 14 January 1898, is capped by a postscript early the next morning announcing Borys's arrival: "It's a fine commentary upon the letter! But salvation lies in being illogical. Still I feel remorse." Later, to other correspondents, he writes tenderly of the boy's poignant "unconsciousness", *not* innocence. He is constantly protective toward him and to his wife, Jessie: a simple being too, but plagued by chronic neuralgia and the burden, not only of anxious domesticity, but also of typing up his hasty

[2] Perhaps the sources of some of Conrad's numerous French expressions have escaped the editors: one well-known quotation, *Ôte-toi de là que je m'y mette* (p.30), abruptly annotated as meaning "Make room for me", should have been ascribed to Saint-Simon (from the *Catéchisme Politique des Industriels*).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manuscripts. To work and to provide for these dependants, to maintain, as he so well understands in his conception of Captain Whalley, a competent independence of being, was his own saving illusion—with all inevitable temperamental ambivalence:

"Look forward, ever forward. What a sell! For me to look forward is folly—but then it's good. Don't you throw cold water on my vision. There's no reason why you should. We shall work. By heavens we shall work!"

(To Edward Garnett, 29 September 1898)

And work he does. Appropriately, the first stirrings of the gruelling *Nostromo* are recorded as these letters close.

Seeing & Believing

Recent Poetry—By JOHN MOLE

"IT IS GETTING harder and harder to write a poem. That is, I can start one well enough—but how to finish." Only a confident poet risks making a statement like that in the secret knowledge that he will get away with it and deserves to; knowing also that as a direct witness to his commitment it is part of the greater risk of presuming to write poetry at all. In this case the poet is Louis Simpson, examining his craft in a marvellously candid working autobiography—*Air With Armed Men*, published in 1972 and long overdue for reissue. What he goes on to say is worth quoting at some length:

"I used to be able to begin and finish a poem. I found that the poem was directed by certain external forces towards a certain end. But one day I found that ideas were better expressed in prose. No, it was more than that. I found that I no longer wished to please.

The reader has certain stock responses to ideas, and certain responses—not very strong, perhaps, but operative nevertheless—to metaphor, meter, and rhyme. A poem that satisfies his stock responses is 'good'; a poem that does not is 'bad'. I find myself wanting to write bad poems—poems that do not depend on stock responses. I want to write poems that will not please. Recently I have been learning to write this new kind of poem. The most important change is in the content. . . .

Instead of statements which reassure the reader by their familiarity, or shock him by their strangeness—instead of opinions, there are only images and reverberations.

I can never finish these poems. I wrestle with them and leave off when I am exhausted. Frequently, all that remains is a handful of phrases.

The difficulty is that, to write this new kind of poem, which springs mainly from the subconscious, I must work not at technique, but at improving my character."

The scope and outcome of this discovery, redirection of energies and experiment with the constituents of his character—the burden of memories, intuitions, and dream-bound responsibilities he brings with him as an American of Jamaican and Russian parentage—can now be clearly seen in his *Selected Poems 1949-83*,[1] chosen from all his books to date and placed in groups rather than a single chronology. In a "Note to the Reader", speaking still as the discreet but determined director of attention, he announces: ". . . there is an opening section of 'Songs and Lyrics'—in other sections the poems are centred around an idea. I believe that this arrangement shows the nature of my writing more clearly than has appeared up to now in separate books."

It does. In each section there's a movement from well-wrought formalism, those external forces moving towards a certain end in strict, often ballad-based stanzas with their echoes of Yeats and the early Auden, into a wider, more inclusive and populated world of deceptively relaxed fictions where the imagery of dream is continuously merging with witty social observations. The shift is from the desk and its position of control, its single framed outlook on a narrow tradition which—as Simpson views it—has resulted in the poet sitting there, to the open road at the end of which "we come to ourselves." To move out into the open, to enlarge the range and sympathies of one's poetry, is to find that "the land is within." "Deep, deep in the interior/The temple of the God is hidden."

As Simpson works away at this transformation, or *release*, the emphasis of poem after poem is on a celebration of the moment of setting out. He becomes his own imaginary traveller, and in "As a Man Walks", for example, a visit to Australia serves to define all that is invigoratingly strange about his new sense of direction. It's a journey of the mind, an intuitive sense of trust in the adventure of what lies ahead:

As a man walks he creates the road he walks on.
All of my life in America
I must have been reeling out of myself
This red dirt, gravel road.

[1] *People Live Here: Selected Poems 1949-83*. By LOUIS SIMPSON. Secker & Warburg, £6.95.

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Three boys seated on motorcycles
conferring . . .

A little further on,
A beaten-up Holden parked off the road
with two men inside passing the bottle.
Dark-skinned . . . maybe they are aboriginal.

I might have been content to live
In Belle Terre, among houses and lawns,
but inside me are gum trees,
and magpies, cackling and whistling,
and a bush-roaming kangaroo.

People Live Here is the overall title of these Selected Poems, and increasingly Louis Simpson has striven to be in there among the people. As an epigraph to a section of his 1976 collection *Searching for the Ox* he quoted from Wordsworth, "I have wished to keep the reader in the company of flesh and blood." He knows that as a close observer with that "nerve-tic irony" he must always be at a remove from the scenes he passes through, but he's engaged upon what he has called "The Adventure of the Letter I", breaking down the self-absorbed identity of poet into fugitive fragments of experience and attempting to reconstitute them into something new and generously inclusive. He wants to create a Whitmanesque republic of the imagination in which he is both an invisible witness and the travelling representative of everything he can possibly get into a poem. The poet who could fuse lyric and argument in lines as powerful and beautiful as these from "The Goodnight"—

The lives of children are
Dangerous to their parents
With fire, water, air,
And other accidents;
And some, for a child's sake,
Anticipating doom,
Empty the world to make
The world safe as a room

—decides they won't do for him any more. The tension in his work must cease to be set up by metre and rhyme. Instead, it must become the relationship between the poet and the voice of his ancestry in the process of becoming the Voice of America:

To their simple, affectionate questions
he returned simple answers.
For how could he explain what it meant to be a writer . . .
a world that was entirely different,
and yet it would include the sofa
and the smell of chicken cooking.

IT'S THAT PASSION TO *include* and to respond to the world's passion to be included that has made Louis Simpson the poet he is—"voices and shadows of desire/and the tears of things . . . Around us/Things want to be understood." He's aware of the dangers of a romantic, hobo-ing sentimentality in this, and continually checks it. Sometimes it's fascinating to watch him mixing a limpid brew of simile and sententiousness, correcting himself and then making that correction the point of the poem;

The fallen snow gleamed in the dark
like water. Everything is a flowing,
you have only to flow with it.

If you did, you would live to regret it.
After a while, passion would wear off
and you would still be faced with life,
the same old dull routine.

In fact, although he's finely tuned to "image and reverberation", Simpson is addicted to a quotidian melancholy, and he gets many of his best effects by gathering a kind of numinous cloud around "the same old dull routine". He fills a poem with people and objects, hints at the desolation lying always just beneath the commonplace, then dissolves it in a wistful evanescence—"The shadow of the word/flitting over the scene,/the street and motionless crowd." His ironic urbanity is not always enough to allay the suspicion that the effects come a bit too easily at times.

What he has achieved is a distinctive cosmopolitan *poésie de départ* with an American accent, a carefully contrived conversational poetry which can be enjoyed at many levels—for the resonance of its dream-images, its engaging anecdotes, wry proverbial wisdom, and abundant delight in the patterns of inconsequence which make up the randomness of human behaviour. It certainly does not rely on stock responses. It relishes the necessary, complicit agility of its readers. With its central metaphors of the unreeling road, the journey ("I am going into the night to find a world of my own") and the poet surprised by unexpected, welcome shafts of sympathy ("Who lives in these dark houses?/I am suddenly aware/I might live here myself"), it is a poetry which lives in the imagination as a distinctive landscape of shifting perspectives and unfinished conversations, but not as firmly in the memory as those earlier "finished" poems based directly on Simpson's experience as a rifleman in the Second World War, his Jamaican childhood, and the shaping energies of metre and rhyme. In fact, that declarative last line of "Love, My Machine" ("I am going into the night to find a world of my own") while it anticipates the direction his later work is to take, serves also as an echo (already fading) of the remarkable compassion and authority of "My Father in the Night Commanding No", one of the finest poems written since the War and—for all his admirable openness to experiment and risk—representative of Simpson's truest gift.

That gift is for plain, heart-breaking candour and for conveying the helpless wisdom of a child's-eye-view through those very statements which he came to mistrust. Though a consistently fine poet who knows that "restlessness is a sign of intelligence", his reputation is most likely to come to rest on lines like these:

And yet my father sits and reads in silence,
My mother sheds a tear, the moon is still,
And the dark wind
Is murmuring that nothing ever happens.

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Beyond his jurisdiction as I move
Do I not prove him wrong? And yet, it's true
They *will not change*
There, on the stage of terror and of love.

The actors in that playhouse always sit
In fixed positions—father, mother, child
With painted eyes.
How sad it is to be a little puppet!

Their heads are wooden. And you once pretended
To understand them! Shake them as you will,
They cannot speak.
Do what you will, the comedy is ended.

Father, why did you work? Why did you weep,
Mother? Was the story so important?
"Listen" *the wind*
Said to the children, and they fell asleep.

Anyone unmoved by these lines, as Randall Jarrell once wrote of a passage by Whitman, would boil his babies up for soap.

If Louis Simpson's American landscape is the workaday broadcloth of common experience lit by a gentle glow, Amy Clampitt's is a glittering brocade. Like the kingfisher which provided the title of her first book, her style is darting and iridescent. She's a mercurial poet who delights in the intricacies of syntax and metaphor in a permanently surprised and rather nervy way, and her outlook is a kind of coastal gaze with the sunlight in her eyes and with the hinterland of tradition, wide American spaces, and complex European culture behind her. *What the Light Was Like*,[2] her second collection, opens with "A Baroque Sunburst" which

struck through such a dome
as might await a groaning Michelangelo,
finding only alders and barnacles
and herring gulls at their usual squabbles,
sheds on the cove's voluted
silver the aloof skin tones
of a Crivelli angel: a region,
a weather and a point of view
as yet unsettled, save for the lighthouse
like a Venetian campanile, from whose nightlong
reflected angelus you might suppose
the coast of Maine had Europe
on the brain or in its bones, as though
it were a kind of sickness.

There are eight closely packed pages of notes at the back of the book, providing not so much an explanatory aid as an additional pleasure in themselves—a kind of supplementary anthology full of incidental, lightly-worn scholarship—and amongst them she quotes Heraclitus on the permanence of

[2] *What the Light Was Like*. By Amy Clampitt. Faber, £4.00.

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change: "It is not possible to step twice in the same river." This, it seems, is what fascinates her to the point of obsession and operates as a principle in her poetry. She's preoccupied with the play of light, water and air, and with her own pocket of time as a bubble in the flux, and the movement of her verse is correspondingly vivid in its fidgety animation. It is somewhat similar to the small child in her poem "New Life" who "sees/the world moving past so fast, he delivers daily/not slow words but quick, predicated word clusters."

That fascination with the natural world, with the restless intelligence in things, plays through her packed, weaving, chiming sentences which are also characterised by an overlay of philosophy, theology and world myth, in all of which she is clearly very well-read:

the spruce
has no taproot, but to hold on
spreads its underpinnings thin—

a gathering in one continuous,
meshing intimacy, the interlace
of unrelated fibres
joining hands like last survivors
who, though not even neighbours

hitherto, know in their predicament
security at best is shallow.

That phrase "a gathering into one continuous, meshing intimacy" echoes throughout the book. In another poem a cat's eyes are described as a "whole green-gold,/outdoor-indoor continuum condensed/to a reproachful pair of jewels"—ornate but dangerous—and it is because she is so preoccupied with change that she keeps going back to the taproot. Rootedness of plants, places, people is emphasised along with a chilly fear of the infinite spaces. "Oh we know nothing of the universe we move through"; "There is no safety." In fact there is something fearful and vulnerable, even rather shrill, in the lissome liveliness of Amy Clampitt. In "The Reedbeds of the Hackensack", which she describes as "a last-ditch effort to associate the landscape familiarly known as the Jersey Meadows with the tradition of elegiac poetry", she alludes to the Sumerian legend of Marduk, the god who built a reed platform on the surface of the waters and thus created the world—something made but frail, having "the effect of unquenchable and universal yearning."

For all the brilliance of her metaphorical observations of the natural world, the finest moments in *What the Light Was Like* concern personal loss, home being where that unquenchable and universal yearning starts from. They can be found most movingly in the collection's central sequence, "Voyages: A Homage to John Keats", which in eight fine poems explores Keats's growth and suffering in art and body (exemplifying what, in another note, Amy Clampitt calls "the powerful way in which literature can become a link with time and places and with minds otherwise remote") and in "Black Buttercups", a poem which shows even more clearly than any in her previous book how much she owes to her admired Elizabeth Bishop:

I was ten years old.
Not three miles by the road that ran
among the farms (still less if
you could have flown, or, just as unthinkable,
struck out across country, unimpeded
by barbed wire or the mire of feedlots)
the legendary habitat of safety
lay contained: the memory
of the seedleaf in the bean, the blind
hand along the bannister, the virgin sheath
of having lived nowhere but here. Back there
in the dining room, last summer's
nine-year-old sat crying on the window seat
that looked into the garden, rain
coursing the pane in streams, the crying
on the other side and it one element—and sits
there still, still crying, knowing
for the first time forever what it was
to be heartbroken.

GJERTRUD SCHNACKENBERG is a younger American poet, of Norwegian descent, whose high reputation invites an enthusiastic welcome for her first collection to be published in Great Britain. Handsomely published, too, in Hutchinson's newly-launched poetry series that also includes volumes by Dannie Abse and Kevin Crossley-Holland about which I shall hope to write at another time. Like Amy Clampitt's, Schnackenberg's work is intelligent, subtle, accomplished in its craft, and intensely bright. *The Lamplit Answer*[3] dazzles, but its finest poems are careful, questing explorations, seeking an inner light although generously inclusive of the world outside. The work is musical in many of its references and much of its arrangement, and there's a certain amount of arabesque ingenuity to be applauded or endured depending on one's response to the kind of skill which insists on displaying itself as a salon performance. "Sonata", for example, is organised in sections according to the form ("Exposition", "Development", etc.), announcing itself rather too disarmingly about half-way

[3] *The Lamplit Answer*. By GJERTRUD SCHNACKENBERG. Hutchinson, £5.95.

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through as the kind of lonely-love poem in which "Analogies . . . sort of stack around/My what-is-life-without-you-here idea." It's a demonstration piece, proclaiming its virtuosity point-blank in line 149 where it announces with remorseless satisfaction that it has reached "Line hundred forty-nine." (It is no doubt this aspect of Gjertrud Schnackenberg's poetry which has drawn praise from John Hollander whose own compulsive numbers game, *Powers of Thirteen*, appeared recently.)

There's something both engaging and resistible about such bravura performance, pages of sportive intimacy leading to a "Coda" which is so disarmingly throw-away as to seem almost banal:

But I dislike it too; I too can't bear it;
I find it unendurably conceited,
Belligerent, high-handed, asinine;
I too can hardly force myself to read it;
Come home before I write another line.

This, though, is less than half the story. Gjertrud Schnackenberg has a profound sense of history, and (like Chopin, the subject of her collection's first, remarkable poem, "Kremlin of Snow", which reconstructs the composer's first year in Paris from his letters and journals) her performances transcend the applause of an admiring salon and are haunted by an almost translucent spiritual intensity. "Time, caught in the act of listening outside the walls of music" is how Chopin's great-aunt described a pose of his mother's, and Schnackenberg works this quotation into a poem which moves in on itself to become an intense improvisation on the music of time.

For her, the essence of time is dedication to selfless action. "How perilous is purity of heart" she writes in "Imaginary Prisons", summoning—though in a book packed with references to philosophy and theology she never mentions him—the ghost of Kierkegaard for whom purity of heart was "to will one thing." The protagonists of several of her finest poems are rare individuals who have given the lamplit answer in their singleness of purpose, commitment to a vision, and radiant humility. Their gift, as she conveys it in a verse of haunting repetitions and great *claritas*, is to unite the worlds of human, animal and inanimate nature in an intimation of purpose which seems always on the point of revelation. There is nothing inflated about this, although attempts to describe its effect may seem so. "The Heavenly Feast", a meditation on the life and death of Simone Weil in simple elegiac quatrains, has a lightness of being which is the movement of the poem itself, dancing to the solemn music of a child's song:

You finally lacked the strength
Even to lift your hands:

Father, I cannot stand
To think of them and eat.
Send it to them, it is theirs.
Send this food for them,

For my people still in France.
And turned your face away,
As famished as the grass.
Only the stones at first

Seem to have a part in this,
And the little height of the grass
As it gains a fraction-inch.
But hidden in the grass

As if the grass itself
Were giving out a cry
I overhear the finch
Begin her native rhyme

And toil to paraphrase
Her version of your words.

Something of the same lucid compassion informs the best of Gjertrud Schnackenberg's autobiographical writing—those bitter-sweet, gamesome love poems apart—and she closes the volume with a poem, "Supernatural Love", which contains her title phrase and recalls her father whose memory is another persistent presence in her work:

My father at the dictionary-stand
Touches the page to fully understand
The lamplit answer, tilting in his hand

His slowly scanning magnifying lens,
A blurry, glistening circle he suspends
Above the word "Carnation. . . ."

The daughter touches her own pages with the same sense of loving and curious absorption, and an awareness of "the obligation due to every thing/That's smaller than the universe."

A SIMILAR OBLIGATION and awareness is at the centre of Frances Horovitz's work too but, whereas Gjertrud Schnackenberg delights in contrivance and seeks refinement to the pure essence through the perfection of often complex forms, she pares her poems down to a minimum of words, each weighed for its place in short imagistic poems of even shorter lines. The effect is one of distillation, a

Northrop Frye on Shakespeare

One of the greatest literary critics of our time here provides a remarkable introduction to the genius of William Shakespeare through a study of ten of Shakespeare's most popular plays, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Measure for Measure, Richard II, Hamlet, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra* and *The Tempest*. The outgrowth of a lifetime of study and teaching, Frye's insights will inform and delight both the expert and the first time reader of Shakespeare. £12.95.

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pellucid lyricism of love and nature, capable of surprising with a sudden stretch of great beauty but contracting at times into a thinly disguised invitation to spot the haiku:

> *At night the valley dreamed of snow,*
> *lost Christmas angels with dark-white wings*
> *flailing the hills.*
> *I dreamed a poem, perfect*
> *as the first five-pointed flake,*
> *that melted at dawn:*

There's rather too much of a knowing formula at work in her method of attempting to make description an active element of the world it describes. Her verbs tend to draw attention to themselves in a way that turns statement into the captions for arty photographs ("a frail wind hurries the brown leaves", "black trees/barricade the sky", "a full moon slices the wood", etc.) so that at any moment animation is frozen in its tracks by the self-consciously poetic. Frances Horovitz's poems hover, shift, alight on a brilliant image, sometimes holding fast and engaging the imagination but often running the risk of evaporating in a mist of sentimental, soft-focus rhetoric ("desire is formless between us/we are enormous as stars").

Her strengths, though, are considerable, and her *Selected Poems*,[4] edited after her tragically early death in 1983 by Roger Garfitt, is an impressive collection. It is perhaps unfortunate that the growth of interest in her work which Garfitt mentions in his editor's note has been nourished by memorial pamphlets and readings, however generous these have undoubtedly been. It does no service to a gift to enshrine it, and there is the danger that a poet whose work combines an attractive, vulnerable delicacy with a considerable mythologising power will herself become a myth —disappearing not into the poems but into the excessive claims made for them by a small circle of admirers.

Frances Horovitz is a poet whose art witnesses to an abiding love and courage. It is marked by an intuitive sense of history and prehistory, great openness and generosity to her friends, and a fearful tenderness for her son ("Oh could I believe the living and dead inhabit one house under the sky/ and you my child run into your future for ever"), but to suggest as one critic has already done that "her voice is not that of the 'age' but of the earth" is to make the kind of noise that provokes an embarrassing echo.

> *A postcard from the mountains.*
> *"Love to all", you write,*
> *disdaining particulars for the general mode.*
> *You love us all—*
> *such kindness numbs, appals.*
> *Where you holiday in packaged, glistening snow*
> *I would come as fire, as revelation beast,*
> *and fuse our bones to the unmelting rock.*

A poet who can write as directly as this deserves not to be overrated.

---

[4] *Selected Poems*. By FRANCES HOROVITZ. Bloodaxe Books, £4.95.

[5] *Collected Poems*. By CHARLES TOMLINSON. Oxford University Press, £15.00.

IN A SHORT PROSE PIECE from one of the books now gathered into his *Collected Poems*, Charles Tomlinson writes, "One accords the process its reality, one does not deify it", and this might serve as a definition of his intent and achievement.[5] He is the strict celebrant of process, insisting at all times on accuracy of observation as a moral obligation. Seeing is believing but it is also a discovery of self. "'Who is this?'/they say, who should have asked/'What does he see?'." "What he saw/Discovered what he was" Tomlinson writes of John Constable, and in "Portrait in Stone" he describes the process of sculpting as an act of synthesis and revelation:

> *Face in stone and*
> *Stone in face:*
> *Compacted in this still embrace*
> *Neither displaces either.*
>
> *The eye that married them,*
> *Grown wiser with the deed,*
> *A twofold matrimony thus*
> *Makes mind and eye unanimous.*

Tomlinson is always emphasising the integrity of the individual in the act of perception; the keener the eye, the clearer the spirit. "What does the man/who sees/trust to/if not the eyes?" he writes in "A Garland for Thomas Eakins", and in "Face and Image" he insists:

> *For, still, we must*
> *in all the trust of seeing*
> *trace*
> *the face in the image, image in the face*

"Self is clear/as what we keenest see and hear", and in the later poems particularly Tomlinson's visual concerns are augmented by an attentiveness to sound, a skilful internal rhyming which is related to his vision. As he writes in "Words for the Madrigalist", "Hear with the eyes as you catch the current of their sounds"; and in the close texture of a poem such as "How it happened", from "Four Kantian Lyrics", he shows what he means:

> *It happened like this: I heard*
> *from the farm beyond, a grounded*
> *churn go down. The sound*
> *chimed for the wedding of the mind*
> *with what one could not see . . . .*

For all his delight in "the profusion of possibilities", not least in America where the landscapes and "all the mob of objects" have offered him new worlds for old—Tomlinson remains a rather austere poet. "Art/Is complete when it is human." Yes, but to appreciate his work one has to come to terms with a certain "fecund chill" (the phrase is his, and exact) which lies at the heart of it, and which the strictness of the poems implicitly acknowledges. The human is complete only when his art demands his uninterrupted concentration. All incidentals are mere illustration, and

> *Illustration is white wine*
> *Floating in a saucer of ground glass*
> *On a pedestal of cut glass:*
>
> *A static instance, therefore untrue.*

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Even if his poems are rather cold in their fluency, Tomlinson is never less than true to their imperatives. "Look. Listen", they command. He does, and we do.

FEW POETS COULD BE less austere than Paul Durcan or more helplessly human. His art is turbulent, entirely open to accident, muddle, and sheer bloody absurdity, and in his new collection *The Berlin Wall Café*[6] he is by turns banal, heartbreaking, zany and compulsively readable. A kind of visionary troubadour with his feet and show very firmly on the road, in the first part of the book he entertains with a stand-up comedy of scurrilous anecdotes, bizarre fantasies, and cod news reports, many of them aimed at targets of political and religious repression. "Archbishop of Dublin to Film Romeo and Juliet" is typical in its mixture of surreal invention and contemptuous relish:

> *The Archbishop of Dublin,*
> *Inspired by the example of Saint Samuel Beckett*
> *—We were told—*
> *Will isolate Romeo and Juliet*
> *In separate refrigerators:*
> *Romeo in a refrigerator in Rome,*
> *And Juliet in a refrigerator in Armagh;*
> *From which they will commune*
> *By telephone. At the climax—of the film—*
> *Intercourse will take place by television link,*
> *Courtesy of Eurovision. . . .*

However, it's in the second part of *The Berlin Wall Café* that we find Durcan's real achievement. This is a celebration of domestic life occasioned by the end of his marriage. In a sequence of poems, most of them addressed to his ex-wife Nessa, he explores in retrospect his "addiction to romantic love" which in the demands it made on their relationship has led Nessa to "seek, instead, the herbal remedy of a sane affection." The poems are full of grief and grim humour but without reproach or self-pity. They often glance back at the institutionalised repression which gave rise to the satire in the book's first half, and set against it the liberation of an erotic love which Durcan now invests with the full weight of personal loss:

> *Standing up naked on the kitchen floor,*
> *In the smog-filtered moonlight,*
> *You placed your hand on my little folly, murmuring:*
> *I have come to iron you, Sir Board.*
> *Far from the tyrant liberties of Dublin, Ireland,*
> *Where the comedy of freedom was by law forbidden*
> *And truth, since the freedom of the state, gone underground.*
> *When you had finished ironing me*
> *I felt like hot silk queuing up to be bathed*
> *Under a waterfall in Samarkand*
> *Or a mountain stream in Enniskerry.*

It is characteristic of Durcan that he manages to achieve

[6] *The Berlin Wall Café*. By PAUL DURCAN. The Blackstaff Press, £4.95.

TEMENOS 7

A Review Devoted to the Arts of the Imagination

CONTENTS: **Prose:** Pierre Emmanuel, *Poetic Act* and *Contemplative Regard*; Liam Miller, *The Eye of the Mind: Theatre of the Imagination of Yeats and Gordon Craig*; Sheila Dhar, *Hindustani Music: An Inward Journey*; David Mitchell, *Nature as Theophany*; Bertrand Mathieu, *Henry Miller's Divine Comedy*; James Cowan, *Dream-Journey: Ritual Renewal among the Australian Aborigines*. Jeremy Reed, *Bats: The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*; John Carey, *The Daughters of Memory*; Arthur Cooper, *Chinese Script: The Poetry of Language-making*. David Gascoyne, interview by Michel Remy.

Poetry: Jean Mambrino, Nine Poems from *La Saison du Monde*, translated by Jonathan Griffin. Poem by Jean Tardieu (translated by David Gascoyne), Michael Armstrong, David Gascoyne, Thomas Kinsella, John Moat, John Montague, Kathleen Raine, Peter Redgrove, Jeremy Reed, Peter Russell.

Reviews: Brian Merrikin Hill on Michel Remy's book on David Gascoyne; Carmen Blacker on Zeami; Philip Sherrard on O. V. de Lubicz Milosz; John Allitt on Samuel Palmer; John Michell on Francis Bacon; Brian Keeble on David Jones; Kathleen Raine on publications by Eranos, I'lle Verte, the Dallas Institute; Muriel Bradbrook on T. S. Eliot; Kathleen Raine on Jeremy Reed and Brian Merrikin Hill; Brian Merrikin Hill on Yves Bonnefoy.

Illustrations: eight colour-plates of Aboriginal rock-paintings (photographs by Colin Beard). Lithograph by Lorraine Gill; four etchings by Brigitte Simon, etc.

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solemnity, tenderness, wit and tongue-in-cheek mock-rhetoric in one short sequence like this. In fact, the poems' effect is gained from an accumulation of such sequences, one of the finest of which is a chaotic, loving description of "the marine insect life of the family psyche":

A home of your own—or a sea of your own—
In which climbing the walls is as natural
As making love on the stairs;
In which when the telephone rings
Husband and wife are metamorphosed into smiling
accomplices,
Both declining to answer it;
Initiating, instead, a yet more subversive kiss
—A kiss they have perhaps never attempted before—
And might never have dreamed of attempting
Were it not for the telephone belling.
Through the bannisters or along the bannister rails
The pyjama-clad children solemnly watching
Their parents at play, jump up and down in support,
Race back to bed, gesticulating wordlessly:
The most subversive unit in society is the human family.

Anyone who is unfamiliar with Durcan's poetry and reads *The Berlin Wall Café* will want more. It can be found in *The Selected Paul Durcan*[7] edited by Edna Longley or in the excellent anthology *Poets of Munster*[8] edited by Sean Dunne, who rightly calls Durcan "one of the most distinctive voices in recent Irish poetry."

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"Jargon: avoid it"

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HUGO WILLIAMS's new collection *Writing Home*[9] is another, though very different and far more elegant, celebration of family life—at the centre of which is the poet's relationship with his father. The correspondence is made up of poems which become letters posted from the past by Williams senior—a flamboyant, debonair actor—and addressed to it by his son, who recalls his life at prep school (where he was always wanting "to do nothing urgently") and an adolescence which seemed a perpetual putting on of style: "Clothes were a kind of wit. You either/carried them off or you looked ridiculous":

My jeans I wanted taken in and flared.
I was very keen on suede.
"You should be with someone a full minute
before you realise they're well-dressed",
said my father. I imagined it dawning on people
in sixty seconds flat
that I was his equal at last.
"Suppose you realise before that?" I asked,
wriggling my toes in my chisel-toed chukka boots.
"Probably queer", said my father.

Posturing and badinage, underscored by affection and a mutual delight in discreet outrage, characterise the relationship between father and son. The former's letters home, in the sequence "An Actor's War", are full of fusty Thespian mannerisms (a local pub is remembered as "the very Elysium of Alcohol") but speak for themselves and in the context of the whole book are not mocked. As the young Hugo Williams grows in confidence, his father, having returned from the War and failed to pick up his career, is wounded by the peace. Out of work at fifty and hardly able to get up in the morning, he becomes a droll and sadly philosophic veteran with "cigarette burns/like bullet holes in his pyjamas", but in his prime he was the same age as his son is now at the time of recollection and writing. This gives the collection its particular poignancy. *Writing Home* is a portrait of the Actor as Ageing Dog, and of the Poet as Young Pup, but even more than that it is about that trick of time which brings them both together as contemporaries on the same stage until the regular programme has to be resumed:

Now that he has walked out again
Leaving me no wiser,
Now that I'm sitting here like an actor
Waiting to go on,
I wish I could see again
That rude, forgiving man from World War II
And hear him goading me.
Dawdling in peacetime,
Not having to fight in my lifetime, left alone
To write poetry on the dole and be happy,
I'm given to wondering
What manner of man I might be.

[7] *The Selected Paul Durcan*. Edited by EDNA LONGLEY. The Blackstaff Press, £4.50.
[8] *Poets of Munster*. Edited by SEAN DUNNE. Anvil Press/Brandon, £10.95.
[9] *Writing Home*. By HUGO WILLIAMS. Oxford University Press, £3.95.

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I HAVE BEEN READING *Randall Jarrell's Letters*[10] while putting this piece together (as he would have said). They are full of brilliance, fierce competitiveness, and not a little back-biting. For much of his career, despite his enthusiasm for good new poets, he was obsessively jealous of his, and other poets', ranking. He was a master of the put-down, not least of critics, and given to a childlike one-upmanship boasting—as amusing to observe as it was no doubt exasperating to live with. Like his even more competitive friend John Berryman he spent much of his career teaching in universities, and as a fêted super-achiever he loved being top of the class even while relaxing: "I've just taken a Rorschach test for Eileen Berryman—I am about the twentieth poet she's done. It took three hours; apparently I see five or six times as many things as most of the others."

Only in his last months, and after he had come out of a severe depression, did he seem to begin to question the whole breakneck literary ball-game—"as if", comments his widow, who has admirably edited these letters into a Life, "his recent misery had taught him at last that who ranked with whom was truly on the surface of art and that . . . the surface 'doesn't matter compared to our real life and real self'."

I HAVE HAD TO SELECT the books reviewed in this piece from over 40 titles, and many reputations which called for attention have been passed over. One poet, though, I am determined to squeeze in. He is R. L. Barth, whose pamphlet *Forced-Marching to the Styx*[11] is a small collection of outstandingly accomplished poems written out of his experience in the US Marine Corps (1966-69) and as a long-range reconnaissance leader in Viet Nam. They are the response of a keen, formal mind to combat, and recall the very best of Louis Simpson's and Randall Jarrell's poems of first-hand war experience. Write off for them today.

There are no young men:
they are hiding, Viet Cong, or dead.
Only the old folk, children
and empty-breasted

mothers still remain,
survivors among all the wreckage.
Are they trying to retain
some hold? or to edge

from a commitment,
patiently waiting out their desire?
I don't know. Once arrogant,
bringing aid, the fire

of napalm, and lead,
I become one of their witnesses
to history: this seedbed,
with its crevices

sluicing through earth's crust;
this seedbed, like a dry pod shaken
over a dead land, like lust
without a woman.

[10] *Randall Jarrell's Letters*. Edited by MARY JARRELL. Faber, £25.00.

[11] *Forced-Marching to the Styx*. By R. L. BARTH. Perivale Press (13830 Erwin Street, Van Nuys, California 91401), $2.50.

In a Barber's Shop

The solid board is slid along
the chair-arms.
Indulgent laughs fill the room,
old men peeping over their papers.
The boy's face reddens.

Then, boy and father meet
glances through the wide mirror:
a veil of eternity lifted
as they recognise their growing
together with,
"Just trim round the ears please"
the white cloth covers time again.
Dad returns to his paper
and son bends his head meekly,
as he will have to learn.

Stephen Wade

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Books Encountered

Voltaire. By A. J. Ayer. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

Brisk, lucid, and searching study, drawing attention to less-known works, and examining notably Voltaire's religious views, controversies, and conflicts, but understandably underplaying his theatre.

Daughters and Lovers: The Life and Writing of Mary Webb. By Michèle Aina Barale. Wesleyan University Press, $19.95.

Feminist literary biography of the author of *Gone to Earth* and *Precious Bane*, famously praised by Stanley Baldwin. Following earlier biographers, Ms Barale denies that *Cold Comfort Farm* was a skit on Webb; but it still makes relevant reading.

Realism in European Literature: Essays in Honour of J. P. Stern. Edited by Nicholas Boyle and Martin Swales. Cambridge University Press, £25, $39.50.

Eleven distinguished essays by such as Erich Heller, Graham Hough, Renford Bambrough, etc., on realists from Shakespeare (!) through Dickens, Balzac, Nietzsche, and Proust to Henry James. What, in a word, is truth?

William Golding, The Man and His Books: A Tribute on his 75th Birthday. Edited by John Carey. Faber, £12.50.

Surprisingly worthwhile and critical compilation, including personal memoirs (one of Golding in Greece, by Peter Green) and analytical assessments, whose authors include Craig Raine, Barbara Everett, John Bayley, John Fowles, Ted Hughes, and Seamus Heaney. A handful of nuggets.

G. K. Chesterton: A Biography. By Michael Ffinch. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.

Illuminating on Chesterton's drinking and the flaws in his marriage, this nevertheless fails to get far beyond Maisie Ward's pioneering life. Chesterton's best essays still read well, if not as well as in adolescence; but most of the rest seems fatally Edwardian.

Blake's Innocence and Experience Retraced. By Stanley Gardner. Athlone Press, £20.

Serious and challenging effort to re-examine (and in a sense revive) Blake's *Songs* in the context of his life and surroundings, and in parallel with the etchings, rather feebly reproduced here on glossy paper.

Robert Graves: The Assault Heroic, 1895-1926. By Richard Perceval Graves. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

First volume of what looks like the official biography, by Graves's nephew. Tantalisingly, it concludes with "The Arrival of Laura" (Riding). If what's to come is as detailed and well-crafted as this—reviewers beware. More on the poems would help.

The Sherlock Holmes Letters. Edited by Richard Lancelyn Green. Secker & Warburg, £14.95.

Another spate of Holmesiana, more amusing than earlier Doyleiana in the same vein. These are letters to the press about and "by" Holmes, Watson, and Mycroft, pointing out inconsistencies, sometimes invoking help to solve crimes.

Milton: A Study in Ideology and Form. By Christopher Kendrick. Methuen, £25.

As part of the fashion for repoliticising poetry, an Assistant Professor at Bryn Mawr puts Milton in the context of what he calls "emergent capitalism", stressing the centrality of the Puritan revolution and the poet's place in it. Over-insistent, I thought.

Valuation in Criticism and Other Essays. By F. R. Leavis. Collected and edited by G. Singh. Cambridge University Press, £27.50, paper £9.95.

Billed as "probably" the last collection to contain previously unpublished material, this reintroduces old acquaintances, including "Under Which King, Bezonian?", but also unearths a typescript on "T. S. Eliot's Influence", an essay on value judgment, and "Notes on Wordsworth", insisting on his battle with convention.

Write On: Occasional Essays '65-'85. By David Lodge. Secker & Warburg, £12.95.

A sparkling collection of personal and literary pieces, two of the latter from these pages. The proceeds go to Care (9a Weir Road, Kibworth, Leicester), to help build sheltered "villages" for mentally handicapped adults. Good cause: good author: good book.

Barbara Pym. By Robert Emmet Long. Ungar, $16.95.

Disappointingly pedestrian but comprehensive account of the life and novels, with reports on others' work in progress. Plot summaries, however well told, are no substitute for insight; there's little sense of Barbara Pym's sly, rueful wit.

Enid Bagnold: A Biography. By Anne Sebba. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £15.95.

"Only negresses have orgasms", Enid Bagnold is said to have told her son. It was doubly shocking—or, perhaps more truly, sad. Her work was part of a busy life as Lady Jones, chronicled here a touch uncritically, but absorbingly enough.

H. G. Wells: Desperately Mortal. By David C. Smith. Yale University Press, $24.95, £18.50.

Too, too solid biography by the Professor of History at the University of Maine, packed with scholarship but flawed for me by its uncritical acceptance of Wells's sincerity, notably in womanising. But then the author is "a believer in the possibility of a Wellsian future." A one-man club?

Apocalyptic Marvell: The Second Coming in Seventeenth Century Poetry. By Margarita Stocker. Harvester Press, £32.50.

Exhaustive historico-religious investigation of what lay behind and within Marvell's major poems, so easy to read as unforcedly poised. At times, it seems to shovel too much in; but its analysis does for Marvell what John Livingstone Lowes did for Coleridge.

George Eliot and Blackmail. By Alexander Welsh. Harvard University Press, $24, £20.50.

Slightly obsessive study of George Eliot's use of information and the power it confers, which makes Professor Welsh see blackmail as "symptomatic of the modern information culture." To me, somewhat *tiré par les cheveux*: but J. Hillis Miller thinks it "brilliant".

Francis Bacon and Modernity. By Charles Whitney. Yale University Press, $25, £18.50.

Another quest for "relevance"? The title may be. The book places Bacon, and especially his *Instauratio Magna*, in a pre-modern context, showing the conflicts within a mind at once medieval and Renaissance, and embedded in the politics of his age.

R.M.

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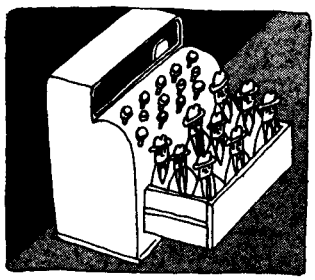
CONTROVERSY

Fact, Faith, & Myth

Changing Concepts of the Free Market—By E. J. MISHAN



IN THIS short appraisal of the merits and demerits of a market economy I shall restrict myself to tentative answers to the following four questions:

1. What is claimed for the market by mainstream economists?

2. How significant are those alleged "distortions" that arise from varying degrees of government intervention in a competitive market?

3. What are the weaknesses and failures of a competitive market by reference to commonly accepted economic criteria?

4. And, last, how important is a market system, or indeed any economic system, in contributing to society's well-being?

Although a bit tedious, it may clarify readers' ideas and prevent semantic squabbles if a distinction is made at the start between six institutional features variously associated with a market economy, at least by its exponents:

(*a*) the private ownership of capital or of economic enterprises;
(*b*) the private management of economic enterprises;
(*c*) the decentralisation of economic enterprise;
(*d*) a highly competitive economy;
(*e*) the use of a pricing system for allocating goods and resources;
(*f*) the use of markets for determining a pricing system.

Such features, though distinguishable, are not mutually exclusive. While it is quite possible to imagine a system of private ownership of capital goods without their being privately managed (and vice versa) or, again, the private management of business firms without decentralisation (and vice versa), it is difficult to visualise a competitive economy *without* a market system; and it is virtually impossible to establish a market economy without the pricing system through which it operates.

If, however, the term "private enterprise" is understood to refer to an economy (or to the sector of a country's economy) in which business enterprises, privately owned and managed, operate through a market—which itself entails a pricing system—we then need only specify that this market be *competitive* (each type of good being produced by many independent firms). Inasmuch as effective competition requires decentralisation and free entry, the resultant term, "*competitive private enterprise*", serves to comprehend all six features. None the less, in order to avoid monotony—and occasionally to shift the emphasis—I shall be liberal with synonyms.

IT IS PERHAPS unnecessary to remark that the precondition of any well-functioning private enterprise system is the establishment of an institutional infrastructure that includes a well-designed system of property rights; acceptable standards of weights, measures, and regulations; ready access to courts of law for arbitration and enforcement of contracts; and effective protection of life and property. Implicit also is a moral infrastructure encompassing a wide range of business procedures and conventions that depend crucially upon mutual trust. Thus, in the last resort, it is embedded in minimally dependable standards of personal rectitude. Should this moral infrastructure ever erode, the market system would become increasingly expensive and inefficient, and ultimately inoperable.

FINALLY, SINCE EVEN in the most thoroughgoing capitalist economy the government has need of resources, if only to maintain the institutional infrastructure, the private enterprise sector is less than the total economy of a nation. What is more, this private enterprise sector can never be *wholly* competitive. For one or more reasons there can be no feasible organisation other than monopoly for particular economic activities, at least in particular areas. It may add force to the exposition, however, to assume, unless otherwise stated, that the economy of the private sector under discussion is reasonably competitive. At all events, this sort of competitive private sector, which is a large part of a "mixed" capitalistic economy, is the best that can be compared with a spectrum of alternative forms of economic organisation distinguishable by varying degrees of state intervention and control—at the extreme end of which is that of complete state control and planning.

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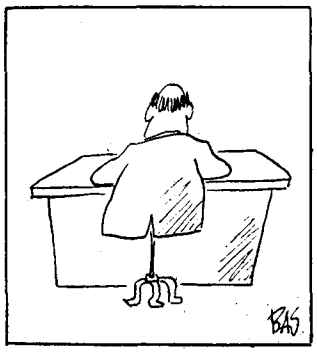
In the Main



ACCORDING TO THE teachings of mainstream economics in the West, any collectivist or centrally-planned economic system suffers from three related but distinguishable disadvantages in comparison with a competitive market economy.

(1) *First*, it is prone to "inefficiency in production". Basic economic resources, that is, are virtually mispriced, being rationed among alternative uses on a system of priorities which diverges from an allocation guided by prices that correctly reflect their relative scarcity. Consequently, a wastage of productive capacity ensues in the particular sense that the amounts of the different goods *actually* produced fall short of those that *could* have been produced.

As an extension of the argument, inefficient management is also likely. For, in the existing political dispensation, bureaucratic considerations will always take precedence over business ones, at least among the more prudent directors of state enterprises. In contrast, the operation of free markets is vindicated by analogy with Darwinian natural selection: firms that are inefficient, or slow to adapt, do not survive long in a competitive free-enterprise economy. (This much-favoured analogy, however, has to be qualified in view of the many instances of negligence and opportunism of private management wherever the latter is divorced from ownership—as it generally is in all large-scale capitalist organisations.)

(2) *Secondly*, a centrally planned economy suffers also from "inefficiency in consumption". In so far as finished goods are rationed on political or ideological principles, the value of goods to consumers does not reflect their true costs of production. As a result, the collection of finished goods actually produced is valued less by the consuming public than any one of a determinable spectrum of alternative collections of goods, each of which could in fact have been produced instead (with the existing degree of productive inefficiency) with the basic resources being used.

At this level, further sources of inefficiency can arise because of imprecision and ambiguity in the details of the central plan and, again, during its implementation, as a result of factory-managers receiving conflicting orders emanating from the different political ministries.

(3) *Thirdly*, a bureaucratically controlled economy does not offer as much scope or incentive for innovation as does a free economy. And although it does not necessarily follow, this consideration has fostered the belief that a Market economy tends to grow faster than a centrally-planned economy.

HOW SIGNIFICANT are these propositions?

Von Mises, Hayek, and others have repeatedly affirmed that no central-planning agency, no matter how technically sophisticated, can ever hope to "coordinate millions of separate decisions" as simply and as economically as does the price system of the market. The statement would be more compelling, however, if the declared economic aim of a Communist régime were that of simulating the free market in order to produce much the same assortment of goods. We should bear in mind, however, that the economic objectives of a Communist government include that of deliberately reducing the amounts of consumer goods which would have been produced in a market economy so as to release resources for a more rapid build-up of basic industries. Indeed, these economic objectives include utilising the remaining resources to produce a collection of consumer goods that accord less with individual preferences and more with ideological priorities. It follows that the classical critique of the centrally-planned economy is more easily defended on political than on economic grounds, especially where in pursuance of the "National Plan" recourse is had to "direction of labour", regarded by Western liberals as a violation of personal freedom.

To be sure, the critics have a point if the centrally-planned economy continues to exhibit "productive inefficiency" so that, in the event, a smaller aggregate output is created than that which could have emerged under a price system that reflected the relative scarcity of the basic resources. They would also have another point if the distribution of the limited amounts of consumer goods among the population were effected by queueing rather than by prices or, at least, by ration cards. But it is tempting to make too much of these economic deficiencies. Although spectacular instances of bureaucratic folly and consequent waste can be cited by Western "Sovietologists", allocative failings of this kind may not be critically important in a growing economy.

Indeed, by reference to their own writings, exponents of a Market economy do not take such allocative defects very seriously. For they also reject what is sometimes known as "Market Socialism",[1] a supposedly ideal economy in which such defects would not be expected to occur, inasmuch as managers are directed to act according to rules that simulate a perfect market. Not only would this hypothetical *public*-enterprise Market economy, say the critics, be overburdened with bureaucratic monitoring of the managers; they also point out that its advocates overlook the sovereign virtue of the *private*-enterprise Market economy: namely, its capacity as a "discovering mechanism" that serves to generate innovations in productive techniques and to promote consumer novelties. Such a mechanism necessarily depends for its efficacy on the lure of substantial profits which accrue to successful entrepreneurs or risk-bearers. Needless to observe, this continuing innovation and experimentation is itself wasteful of resources, as evidenced by the annual number of bankruptcies and by the amount of industrial plant that is discarded long before its useful physical life has expired. But such seeming waste can be rationalised as the unavoidable costs—though not irreducible costs—of the innovative process.

Even in these respects, however, enthusiasm for the private-enterprise Market needs to be tempered. Much of the innovation in the form of research and development that takes

[1] As prescribed, among others, by Professor Abba Lerner in his classic *Economics of Control* (London, 1944).

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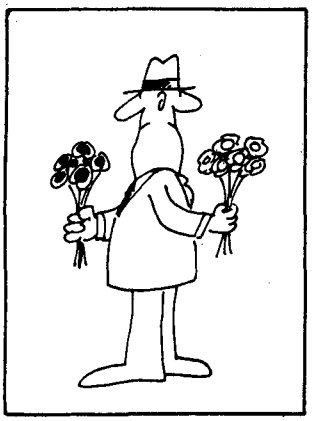
place today in capitalist economies, and is undertaken largely as a matter of routine activity by large firms and governments, can as well be done in Communist states by teams of research-workers. If it is, admittedly, difficult in Communist countries to come across the latest in camera accessories, in electrical appliances, in cosmetics, and in youth attire, it is surely because innovative activity in such countries is for the most part being directed toward other things—better medicines perhaps[2] (as some would claim), but certainly better satellites and missiles.

A FINAL POINT. If we are concerned primarily with the growth performance of the economy as conventionally measured, the choice between a free market system and a centrally-planned one is much less important—particularly for countries whose living standards are currently well below those prevailing in the highly industrialised countries—than the proportion of a country's resources that are devoted to investment in productive capacity. In this connection, it is pertinent to note that over the period 1960-80 the average Gross National Product per capita of the richer Communist countries, as estimated by the World Bank, grew faster than that of the richer capitalist countries.[3]

Governments & the Market



ONCE WE MOVE FROM a comparison of a collectivist with a market economy to that between economies having varying degrees of government direction and control, it is no longer possible to draw firm conclusions.

Neither in respect of growth, nor equity, or quality of life do familiar economic considerations or recent historical evidence justify any presumption in favour of less government intervention. If anything, the contrary is true up to some undefinable point, provided the intervention is economically informed and far-seeing. By enforcing standards of housing and food purity; by controlling levels of pollution, noise, traffic congestion; by regulating the marketing of drugs and pesticides; by the creation of public amenities such as national parks, city boulevards, pedestrian precincts, green-belt areas and the like, governments can significantly improve the quality of life in ways that just cannot arise "spontaneously" from the operation of free markets.

Again, by taxing incomes and luxuries in order to make funds available for the development of a country's infrastructure, or for investment in selected industries, in work-training programmes, and in scientific and technical research, governments can (and do) promote the economic growth of their countries. Generally speaking, the lower the initial level of technology the greater the growth potential of a given amount of investment as a proportion of national income.

There are, however, diminishing returns to investment as a country becomes modernised. Once it catches up with the most advanced industrial countries in respect of industrial skills and technology, further economic growth has to be effected largely by success in edging forward segments of the technological frontier—by its own contributions to innovation in producer and consumer goods.

The evidence is of a piece with the economic logic. The Japanese growth performance ranks high among the industrial nations. Yet it has never been held up (except, in an eccentric moment, by Milton Friedman) as a model of *laissez-faire*. Its economic organisation is a subject of much controversy. But it is closer to the paternalistic cartel economy of pre-World-War-I Germany than, say, to the post-World-War-II American economy.

The often-quoted examples of Hong Kong or Singapore as Market economies are hardly convincing. Each is little more than a city-state (their populations being about 5 million and 3 million respectively) into which a prodigious amount of Western capital has been poured. And even though private enterprise flourishes in these *entrepôt*-type economies, there are also strong government controls. Certainly immigration is restricted in the conscious endeavour to prevent the growing urban prosperity from being swamped by population inflows either from abroad or from the rural hinterland.

At all events, among the less-developed countries the growth record, averaging about 7% for the years 1960-80, is held by South Korea, a fairly large country but indisputably one in which an activist government has played a conspicuous role both in restricting imports and in guiding the country's investment according to its own priorities.

Finally, the so-called "German miracle" cannot be attributed largely to Dr Erhard's free-market policies. Since there had been so much destruction of its productive capacity and its buildings during the last two years of the War, the country perforce started its reconstruction from very low levels of productivity. Moreover, the destruction of so much of its industrial capital ensured that the subsequent recovery would not be hampered, as it was in Britain, by much obsolescent plant and equipment. Again, in contrast to East Germany, West Germany was soon able to count on capital assistance from its new allies.

Once the monetary reform of 1949 had restored confidence in the currency, success was virtually assured under any stable form of government no matter how active or inactive. The decisive factor in the country's rapid economic recovery was, of course, the high quality of its human capital—the enterprise, the skills, the resourcefulness and know-how which form the industrial heritage of a modern nation.

Some auxiliary factors are worth mentioning. Not being subjected, as Britain was, to the political and financial strains

[2] In the recent Paris revelations of Soviet espionage, evidently whole sectors of France's research-and-development in consumer industries (from textiles to toothpaste) were also transmitted to Moscow, possibly for the next one or two (or three) Five Year Plans.

[3] See *World Report* (Washington, D.C., 1982).

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A cross-section of our growth, past, present and future.

May we ask you a couple of questions?

One. Which do you think is the most useful invention of the past hundred years or so?

Two. Which do you think will grow fastest in the next fifty?

You're bound to consider the internal combustion engine, the aeroplane, atomic energy and the microchip, of course. But how about telecommunications?

You have to admit there's a case to be made for them, and it's timely to make it now.

It'll take a short history lesson but we promise to make it as painless as possible.

1866, the Entrepreneur.

The founder of Cable and Wireless was a rather vigorous and determined entrepreneur called John Pender.

In 1866 he was responsible for laying the first transatlantic submarine cable.

With the dots and dashes of the Morse Code, it meant the United Kingdom was only a few minutes away from the eastern seaboard of the United States (Stock Exchange and Wall Street closing prices were transmitted daily).

By the end of the century he'd created a submarine cable empire that virtually covered the world and stretched for fifty thousand miles.

Unending success beckoned? Not exactly.

1920's, the Italian.

A young Italian scientist called Marconi had earlier patented his radio device and now offered a transatlantic telegraph service (the one which brought Crippen to trial).

It was three times faster than cable at about one twentieth of the cost.

Marconi made the British government an offer they couldn't refuse: that his telegraph service and our cable assets be merged.

It was a happy marriage which, helped by the new technology, prospered even during the depressed thirties.

1950's, the voice.

Then in the mid 1950's the first coaxial cable was laid across the Atlantic, carrying distant voices. (Though you still had to queue-up to make a call.)

But the pace of innovation was quickening.

Rockets placed satellites in space, to and from which we bounce messages on 44,000 mile journeys between our earth stations round the world.

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Next came larger coaxials, then the miraculous fibre-optic cable carrying voice and data at the speed of light (the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica in a flash).

Now, computers and microwaves all play their part, but our real growth as a company has accelerated in the past four years.

1981, the new freedom.

In 1981 the government privatised us in its belief that companies flourish when managers are free to act in an entrepreneurial spirit (shades of John Pender).

We are proud to say we have repaid its trust.

Mid-1980's, the explosion.

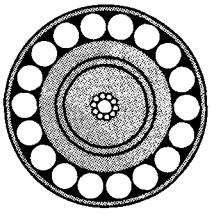
There's nothing new in people's urge to communicate of course. But as international business has grown, this urge has now assumed unprecedented proportions.

Just about every country in the world is expanding and updating its telecommunications. And new technology is constantly needed to make systems faster, cheaper and more effective over greater distances.

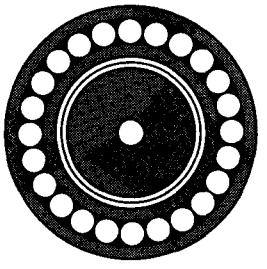
Currently in fact, we're improving and maintaining systems in some thirty-six countries.

In Hong Kong we operate both its internal and external telecommunications systems.

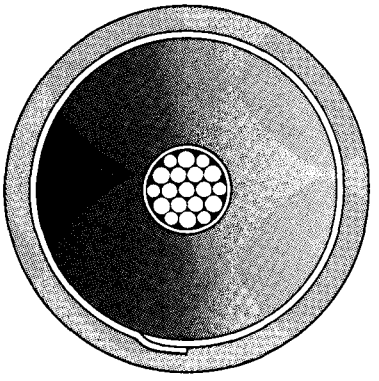
During 1985 we agreed with China to study together the feasibility of establishing up-to-date telecommunications between the main cities of the Yangtze Delta.



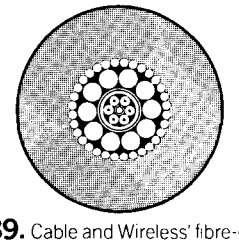
1866. First successful transatlantic cable. Roughly six months to transmit the Bible by Morse Code.



1956. First coaxial cable across the Atlantic. Thirty-six circuits bring phone calls as we know them today.



1974. Over 1,800 circuits – queuing eliminated.



1989. Cable and Wireless' fibre-optic cable to America. 12,000 circuits able to transmit the Encyclopaedia Britannica in a few zips of light.

Meanwhile, in America we've laid fibre-optic cable along the railroad from Dallas to Houston and we are operating circuits from New York to Washington and soon, Chicago.

In Barbados we are co-operating with the government to bring the latest digital communications to the island and help its main industry, tourism.

In Bahrain, we have a 40% stake in one of the most advanced telecommunications services in the Middle East and we manage the entire system.

While in 1984, our ships laid a submarine cable linking Australia and New Zealand with Canada via Fiji and Hawaii–eight thousand miles in all.

The long-term view.

We hope we have shown how Cable and Wireless has grown bigger as the world, in communication terms, has grown smaller.

However, if you would like to know more, write to the Press Office, Cable and Wireless plc, Mercury House, Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8RX.

Cable and Wireless.

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of transforming an Empire into a Commonwealth—not being hampered by highly organised and militant labour unions; nor, as one of the fruits of defeat (shared with Japan), being permitted to spend more than a minuscule proportion of her resources on Defence—the momentum of the economic recovery suffered no restraint or hindrance. Indeed, by 1960, living standards in West Germany had surpassed those in Britain and France and were not far behind those in the United States.

One may reasonably conclude that, provided governments work through or with the market (avoiding, that is, direct price controls, so avoiding also unnecessary bureaucratisation and economic waste), the extent of government control and intervention *per se*, though it does (by definition) interfere with individual choice, cannot be assumed to hamper economic performance in respect either of growth, equity, or allocation; and may well enhance it. What matters most for sustained economic success is the sagacity and consistency of a government's planning, along with those work-characteristics of a people which have evolved from their social institutions and traditions.

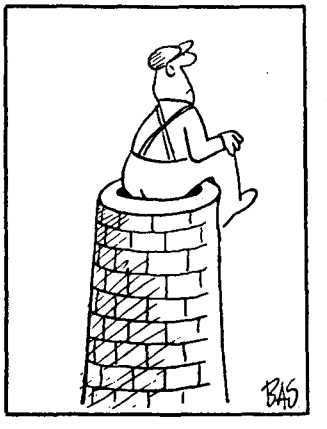
A caveat may be in order before ending this section. In view of the ideological commitment among parties of the radical Left to enhancing the power of the state largely by extending the area of public ownership and management—exemplified in Britain by the electoral pledges of old-guard socialists such as Tony Benn and Barbara Castle to nationalise large segments of British industry—it is as well to emphasise as a necessary (though obviously not sufficient) condition for successful direction of the economy the phrase at the beginning of the preceding paragraph; viz., *provided governments work through or with the market*. For in so far as government control takes the form of public ownership and management, increased bureaucratisation is inevitable even where the economic criteria by which the performance of nationalised industries is to be judged are not very different from those operating within a competitive market. Where, however, as is more likely, the politically-determined guidelines for nationalised industries are at variance with those conforming to appropriate economic criteria, "inefficiency in production" and possibly also "inefficiency in consumption" (as defined earlier) may also be anticipated.

IRRESPECTIVE OF the politically-determined economic goals and guide-lines for nationalised industries, there can be yet graver consequences than economic inefficiency. Although the tendencies toward coercive direction of labour (described in Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*) may well be resisted, a growth in the politicisation of economic activity becomes unavoidable. According as the proportion of the labour force directly controlled by the state increases, effective government becomes that much more dependent upon the continuing cooperation and agreement of organised labour. At a time when the agenda of modern governments are exhausting enough, more parliamentary time will be absorbed in futile wrangling between the various political parties either in supporting or in condemning actual or threatened union actions that are in defiance of ministerial decisions with respect to any of the nationalised industries.

It is not only the misuse of political time, energy, and resources that is at issue, but also the very real danger of activating the inflationary pressure that is latent in the post-War economy.

Since the 1950s the growth of material expectations in the West has made organised labour more strident and more intransigent in its demands. Thus, notwithstanding the chastening effects of mass unemployment over the last four years, labour unions still chafe at monetary restraints and continue to threaten to take "industrial action" in support of wage-claims that are often well in excess of productivity gains. But the more directly the government is involved in industrial disputes—and as *de facto* "managing directors" of all the nationalised industries it becomes wholly and irrevocably involved—the greater is the political pressure that can be brought to bear upon it by organised labour; and the greater, therefore, is the danger of restarting a wage-push inflationary spiral.

Bads & Goods



IN SO FAR AS PROPOSALS from the political Right to make "the face of capitalism more acceptable" (or "less abrasive") address themselves to specific arrangements for the redistribution of income and wealth, which invariably excite inordinate political interest, they are unlikely, if adopted, to produce any enduring effect on people's satisfactions. In this belief, and in order to circumvent the distractions offered by the distributional aspects of various economic schemes, I shall assume henceforth that, on the basis of the electoral majorities in a dozen Western democracies, a politically acceptable distribution of income and wealth has already been achieved. This assumption enables me to move on to other and more potent influences on society's well-being.

An immanent critique of capitalism may prudently begin with the more familiar sources of "market failure"—the failure arising from a need, which the market alone can seldom provide, to create collective goods and to curb collective bads.

The existence of *spillovers*, or collective bads, is a phenomenon against which economists of the radical Right fight a rearguard action by persistently dwelling on examples that appear to argue against the need for state intervention. In particular, repeated emphasis by the Chicago-School economists of the heavy "transactions costs" incurred in correcting spillovers—costs that are incurred in making the

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change to, and in maintaining, a theoretically better allocation—is far from convincing.

True, such unavoidable transactions costs act to favour the prevailing (unsatisfactory) allocation resulting from the spillovers. But this prevailing market allocation itself rests upon an implicit assignment of property rights. Made explicit, they are rights conferred on the owners of the polluting industries or of the polluting goods to continue to inflict damage on the health and amenity of the community at large unless they are paid enough to refrain from doing so. Clearly this (implicit) assignment of property rights puts the burden of proof and expense on the spillover-victims. This burden, therefore, acts to strengthen the apparent economic case for putting up with the prevailing spillovers resulting from unchecked market activity.

Were these property rights in air, water, soil, etc. to be vested instead in the citizenry, so that any pollution nuisance was unlawful unless all victims were adequately compensated, the initial market solution itself would be entirely different. It would consist of less industrial outputs and no damaging pollution whatever. This initial market allocation could now be modified only on the initiative, and at the expense, of the pollutors themselves. Under this reversed assignment of property rights, therefore, these unavoidable transactions costs strengthen the case for a market solution that prohibits all noxious spillovers. What is more, modifications of this market solution made at the expense of the pollutors serve to maintain the welfare of the rest of the community.

LET ME TURN TO the extent of government intervention necessary to control spillovers. The articulated fears that it must necessarily augment the power of the state and diminish individual choice are not only exaggerated, they are misconceived. If British governments, for instance, were less sensitive to producer interests, or even consumer interests, and more solicitous of the health and well-being of their citizens, they could at small cost effect modest but perceptible improvements in the quality of life, certainly more perceptible than those we are supposed to believe will accrue from huge export contracts with Saudi Arabia or from massive road- or ship-building programmes. They might include a simple requirement, for example, that silencers be fitted to all motorcycles and motorised garden equipment; that traffic be barred from designated areas of towns, resorts, and preservation areas; that tobacco advertising be totally abolished; that the manufacture and use of new drugs, pesticides, and food chemicals be prohibited unless and until they had passed stringent and approved tests.

Indeed, with the growth of industrialisation, the riotous spread of urban and suburban development, the destruction being wrought by mass tourism and other forms of wanton consumerism, there is increasing scope for the provision of collective goods which confer benefits simultaneously on many people. Only in particular cases—those where the number of beneficiaries at any one time is small enough to make the collection of user fees a practical proposition—may the private provision of collective goods be more economical than their public provision. The more important collective goods, on the other hand, which provide more widely diffused benefits—the creation of national parks or protective green belts or amenity areas; long-term programmes for better street lighting, for widening footpaths, or for the systematic removal of unsightly buildings in our cities—are better done, or can only be done, by central or local governments.

The Dangers of Innovation

IN ADDITION TO ignoring the range of opportunities open to government-created collective goods in increasing the range of significant choices for the citizen living in a modern industrial country, market enthusiasts are apt to gloss over two rather disturbing implications of the current proliferation of spillover effects.

The first is simply that the mere existence of a spillover (whether the amount of it is "optimal" or not) necessarily reduces individual choice—an implication which, incidentally, is not mentioned in Milton and Rose Friedman's otherwise illuminating book *Free to Choose* (1979). To illustrate, if Mr *A* complains of the prevalence of smog or of aircraft noise, it is not much to the purpose to talk about the cost of "progress" and to point to the impressive increase in industrial products and the growing opportunities for air travel. Mr *A* may be enamoured neither of the products of the smog-creating industries nor of the spread of air-travel services. And if he does decide to make use of them, it may only be because, with the sort of environment which results from the production of such goods, he is left with little choice in the matter.

It follows that although Mr *A* can never be made any worse off by the availability of, say, a tied sale, inasmuch as he can always decline the offer, he may well be made much worse off in consequence of the introduction into the economy of what amounts to a goods-cum-bads parcel—the introduction, that is, of a new good along with one or more inseparable and unwanted spillovers. Save possibly by incurring expenditures in an attempt to reduce the extent of his suffering, there is no way of escaping the quantum of bads inflicted upon him. Such unsolicited packages of goods-cum-bads, therefore, necessarily abridge his freedom to choose. Thus the unbridled activity of the market may continue to add to individual choice in the area of manufactured goods, while diminishing it in the increasingly more important area of environmental amenity.

THE SECOND IMPLICATION arises from the rapidly changing nature of modern spillovers. Far removed from those homely examples of farmers *versus* ranchers or upstream-dyers *versus* downstream-distilleries that abound in the economic journal literature are those more sinister effects arising from new

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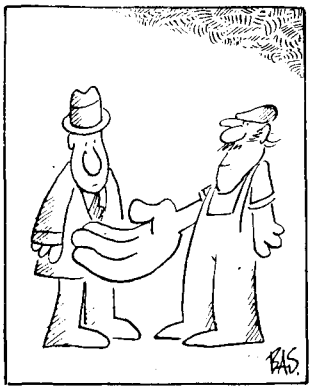
technologies which threaten the health and the lives of populations local and global. In our haste to adopt new methods of production and to market new products, the biosphere in which we are immersed and the ecological equilibrium upon which we depend are being subjected to increasing damage and strain. It may be possible, though highly unlikely, that the full range of adverse consequences of each new chemical and synthetic substance, and their risk-probabilities, will come to light with the passage of time. But we have, at present, no rational way of dealing with such problems.

Bearing in mind the appalling social consequences of introducing heroin about the turn of the century (for two decades advertised and prescribed by the medical profession as a "safe" and "non-addictive" sedative) and more recently those of Methadone (believed for many years to be a non-addictive substitute for heroin)—recalling also the tragic genetic effect of Thalidomide (in Germany: Contergan) sedation prescribed by European doctors, and the far-reaching ecological damage from the global use of DDT and yet more destructive chemical pesticides—it is only too obvious that no provision can be made by the mechanism of the market for the growing hazards of technological innovation.

The post-War cornucopia of drugs and synthetics about whose consequences, singly and in combination, we know so very little now runs into many thousands. We should be foolish to believe that further research and innovation will, on balance, diminish the risk of major or minor disasters. In this more dangerous world we are entering, minimally adequate legislation would entail a broad range of democratic controls, including outright prohibitions, not only over the activities of private enterprise but also over the research activities of scientists and engineers.

Adjusting for Bias



IF THE MARKET cannot cope effectively with spill-overs old and new, and cannot, therefore, be depended upon to prevent either a diminution of environmental amenity or an expansion of the horizon of hazard, its operation might at least be thought to avoid gross inequities. In fact, however, the operation of the Market imparts two distinct sorts of bias, one favouring the present generation as against future generations, the other favouring the consumer as against the worker.

Until very recently, the view prevailing among economists was that a competitive market in some finite resource such as coal, oil, or iron ore would—under familiar conditions—tend to generate depletion rates over time that were optimal in the accepted economic sense of the term. Among other things, however, the demonstration of the theorem depends upon the validity of using the appropriate discount rate in comparing future benefits and costs with those of the present. But once the future benefits and costs are recognised as those accruing to generations yet unborn (as they would be in any economic activity that destroys over time the earth's limited stocks of one or more material), this use of the discount rate is no longer valid. Indeed, given the existence over time of quite modest rates of return on capital, a competitive market solution might well be one that practically exhausts the world's deposits of oil and ores within 50 or 100 years, leaving nothing for future generations.

Admittedly the gains to the economy from currently mining these resources might be wholly or largely invested and re-invested through time at favourable rates of return, in this way accumulating real assets that are eventually valuable enough to compensate future generations for the absence of each of such resources. It is also possible that as particular sources of fuel and metals diminish over time, their rising prices will spur research to discover substitute materials or synthetics. But nothing in this classic theorem turned on either of these contingencies. And there is certainly nothing in the operation of competitive markets to ensure their occurrence to the extent necessary to prevent present generations from engorging themselves at the expense of generations yet to come.[4]

LET ME NOW TURN to the consumer bias of the market.

In describing movements in response to changes in the pattern of demand, economists of the radical Right are prone to dwell on examples in which workers are attracted into expanding industries, or development areas, by the prospect of material advantage. What receives less attention is the obverse of this direction of adjustment: that in which workers are laid off by declining industries. The anxieties and hardships endured by workers until they are re-employed, also the costs incurred in seeking new employment or in retraining, and the costs of moving as well as the psychological strains of leaving a familiar neighbourhood and settling in a new one, are all left out of the calculus of "net advantage". These very real costs are all too often glossed over by invoking such well-starched phrases as "the discipline of the Market".

The presumption among free-market exponents that this "discipline" is an excellent thing can draw neither on theoretical nor on empirical support. At all events, inasmuch as the vicissitudes of consumer demand may be expected to grow with affluence and innovation, the unavoidable "trade-off" of consumer satisfaction for worker dissatisfaction becomes harder to justify. For in high consumption societies, increments to the range of consumer choice—which consist for the most part of the addition of new brands and models to an already bewildering assortment—become less valuable,

[4] The reader interested in an exposition of the theorem and the subsequent critique might wish to glance through the last part of my *Introduction to Normative Economics* (Oxford University Press, 1981).

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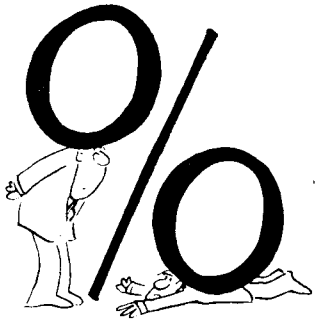
whereas the consequent redeployment of the work-force becomes more onerous.

It has also to be borne in mind that the vagaries of consumer demand, both as between and within broad categories of goods, is agitated and made more fickle not only by commercial advertising but also by a rising volume of international trade in goods that are very close substitutes. The fierce international competition today in autos, stereos, television sets, cameras, watches, computers, and a host of other electric appliances would be painfully disruptive of the domestic economy if allowed to prevail without hindrance and in accordance with radical free-trade doctrine. It would inflict anxiety and hardship on management and employees out of all proportion to estimates of consumer gains from the freedom to switch rapidly and impulsively between highly substitutable goods from different countries, motivated by sales campaigns, ephemeral vogues, and temporary price advantages. Reconsidered without doctrinal commitment, the value to society of enlarging consumer freedom under conditions prevailing today in the West is doubtful.

FINALLY, IN THIS CONNECTION, the continual adoption of new technologies by industry can render hard-earned skills obsolete virtually overnight, a fact that should make it easier to sympathise both with the obstinate resistance of workers to the introduction of new and more efficient machinery and with the growing concern of labour unions not only with real wages but also with the employment prospects of their members.

If such trends continue—and there is no reason to believe otherwise—governments may become less apologetic about introducing additional trade restrictions and commercial regulations that place limits on the frequency and extent to which the country's pattern of production and employment may be disturbed.

Our Self-Defeating Ethos



NOTWITHSTANDING these critical observations, it is not possible to assess the reality of "consumer satisfaction" or, more generally, "want satisfaction"—nor, therefore, to assess the alleged efficacy of the market in providing such satisfaction—unless we first relinquish the economist's maxim that accepts as final the revealed preferences of individuals.

In conditions of widespread destitution or grinding poverty, no reasonable man will dispute the importance of more of the basic consumer goods; more food, more clothing, more shelter. For that matter, it is unsurprising that people who live close to the margin of subsistence or whose living standards, though tolerable, are well below those current in the West—people who live in Third World or Communist countries, for instance—should envy the material abundance of Western (or Far Eastern) capitalism. But the shortcomings and limitations of capitalism are more pertinently and more convincingly argued within the context of these advanced industrial economies of the West where the economic doctrines of the radical Right are in the ascendant.

To the philosophical mind, the most striking characteristic of modern capitalism is its self-defeating ethos. For in order to ensure the absorption of ever larger amounts and varieties of the products and services of the modern economy, it is found necessary to devote considerable resources to the creation of consumer *dissatisfaction*—effectively to inflame the spirit of dissatisfaction with one's existing possessions, with one's style of living, with one's status, and with one's education and accomplishments. The intent and effect of media reports, of official economic pronouncements, and of course the omnipresent advertising industry, are directed specifically to renewing the springs of discontent in Economic Man—which is hardly a prescription for promoting human welfare. Indeed, these developments unabashedly act to obstruct the declared purpose of economic activity which (according to the elementary textbooks) is that of using material resources rationally in order to maximise "want satisfaction".

In the event, the purchase of goods comes to serve a new purpose. For the mass of people in an affluent economy want goods not only for use-satisfaction but increasingly for display satisfaction as a visible index of material success. Economists have, of course, long been aware of this propensity of the over-motivated citizen to act as if the main purpose of his life on earth is that of "keeping up with the Joneses". This "Jones effect" (to use the economist's slang) is formalised in the statement that the welfare of the citizen depends, *inter alia*, upon his command over market goods *relative* to those of others.

The implication of the undeniable existence of the Jones effect, however, is a thorn in the side of the free-market supporters. For the more it predominates—and it is destined to grow with the rise of living standards—the more futile becomes "the conventional wisdom" of seeking to promote the general welfare by raising per-capita consumption.

Again, a mass-consumption economy, emerging as it does from a mass-production economy, rests heavily on standardisation and storability. "The Age of Abundance", it transpires, is abundant with pre-packaged chemically-processed foodstuffs, with plug-in machines, off-the-peg clothing, and plastic knick-knacks. A part of the price we pay for this unending procession of shiny assembly-line products is the concomitant loss of those now rare things that once imported zest and warmth to people's lives; the loss of individuality, uniqueness, and flavour; the loss of true craftsmanship, of local variety and richness; the loss of intimacy, character, and eccentricity.

Moreover, and thinking primarily of innovation in the provision of products and services, I mention two other developments. A large proportion of the consumer novelties that have appeared on the market since the turn of the

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century—examples such as the private automobile, the transistor, television, the stereo, and more recently the video and home-computer, spring to mind—is of the kind that acts to distance us from others. Inevitably, perhaps, service innovations are labour-saving. Thus, we can now buy all the foods and accessories we require for a week or two in a large supermarket without speaking a word to anybody. In business and banking, in travel agencies and retail shops, the ratio of personnel to customers declines from one year to the next. Increasingly we are identified by code numbers, laden with credit cards, and obliged to express our needs by filling forms and pressing buttons. Clerical staffs in a wide range of service agencies spend the greater part of their working hours fingering keys and gazing intently at flickering green letters that race across miniature screens.

This withdrawal from direct communication with our fellow humans has much further to go. Technically speaking, the greater part of education at all levels can be channelled through the television medium on open or closed circuit, supplemented by computerised teaching machines. Although we are loath to recognise it, the nation's teaching personnel could be drastically reduced and the greater part of our schools and universities made redundant. Physicians are coming to depend increasingly upon the computer for rapid diagnoses, and visits to the local doctor will decline as people learn to respond to computer-screen questionnaires in describing their symptoms. The adoption in hospitals of patient-monitoring devices has already made the bedside presence of nurses unnecessary. The temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure of each of several score of bed-patients can be read on a central panel by a single nurse who directs attention to a particular bed only when a critical reading is registered.

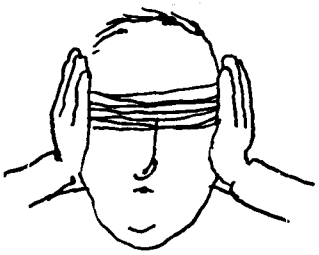
Such is the direction of innovation that for our daily needs and diversions we are coming to depend, whether in sickness or in health, ever more upon the artefacts of technology and ever less upon direct assistance and physical presence of our fellows. Thus the direct flow of feeling, communication, and sympathy with others, which is essential to our sense of community and identity, becomes ever more sluggish as channels for their expression fall into desuetude.

A FINAL OBSERVATION about the "want satisfaction" assumed to be provided by the market's bounty of consumer goods. Families in the West, especially in the US, are already under strain from the weight of abundance even when they complain, as invariably they do, of the difficulty of "making ends meet". Middle-class American homes (and most American homes fall into that category) are littered with books and magazines that never get read, with appliances they hardly ever use, with clothes seldom worn, with discarded sports gear, and with drawers full of impulse-bought gew-gaws. On shelves, mantelpieces, desk-tops, will be found piles of sales catalogues, travel brochures, and subscription forms.

Alas, time itself has become the scarcest resource and places an irremovable constraint on their powers of consumption. They can now hardly find time to make use of their book bargains, their dress bargains, their gadgetry bargains, and their accumulation of technical all-sorts. They have to make "agonising choices" from the expanding variety of "new and exciting" forms of recreation, entertainment, and travel opportunities. Veritably they are harassed by the pressure of abundance on their limited time.

In circumstances such as these (which prevail or will soon come to prevail in all "post-industrial societies"), doctrinal assertions by economists that an extension of the private sector and more competitive markets will contribute to "the enrichment of life", or at least will enhance consumer satisfaction, cannot be taken seriously.

The Size of the State



IS IT REASONABLE to expect an expansion of the private sector of the economy over the foreseeable future?

In a controversial article a few years ago[5] I argued that the prospects for a reduction in the public sector of the economy are far from bright. Apart from the institution of progressive taxation which makes available to governments an ever larger proportion of the nation's resources (unless tax rates are continually reduced, which they never are), the very nature of scientific and technical progress is such as to strengthen the power of modern governments *vis-à-vis* their citizens. A rapidly evolving computer technology, for example, not only processes ever larger amounts of information but also enables government agencies to keep confidential files on all its citizens, for which undertaking there are any number of plausible pretexts.

Again, there is an articulate demand by large sections of the public for more powerful government arising both from a growing apprehension of the many hazards associated with new techniques of industry and the marketing of new chemicals, and for a need to resolve, or at least contain, the bitter conflicts that are generated by the spread of modern spillovers. Among the former are the dangers involved in the use of the many new drugs and pesticides. Media exposures have led to public insistence, especially in the USA, on more detailed regulation and systematic monitoring. In addition, there has been a demand for new legislation to provide administrative guidance in making the morally painful decisions that currently have to be made by medical men and others in rationing expensive medical equipment and medical treatment among too many sufferers, and also in determining how far to interfere with the human embryo or to prolong life in circumstances that cause distress to the patient and his family.

As for the latter sources of pressure acting to expand the powers of government—the growing intensity of conflicts of

[5] "On the Road to Repression and Control", ENCOUNTER, July 1976.

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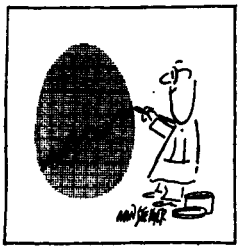
interest and sentiment arising from technical innovations—they take on a variety of forms. The extraordinary growth in the number of animal experiments, the spread of animal factories, the increased popularity of abortion, the destruction of rain forests, the "development" of wilderness areas, the havoc being wrought in many localities by mass tourism—all have brought into being dedicated and sometimes fanatical opposition groups. The resulting antagonisms between, say, animal liberationists, on the one hand, and scientists or farmers on the other; between pro-abortionists and anti-abortionists; between environmentalists and industrialists, to mention only a few instances, call for more legislation and mediation and, therefore, for specific extensions of government power.

Thus, while it is doubtless quite possible for a determined government to reduce personnel in some departments, to divest itself of some of its peripheral economic functions, or to surrender ownership and control of a number of enterprises that would function at least as well in the private sector, such occurrences cannot be supposed to amount to a "countervailing" trend. Over the foreseeable future, the size and power of the state are virtually certain to grow.

Keynes in Vienna



Vienna

THERE is an "Austrian difference", especially when it comes to the beliefs of economists on the role of budgetary cycles, the state, public spending, and the like. They are all Western, freedom-loving, and generally market-oriented; but the unanimity stops there. A recent inquiry delved into the views of some 938 professors of economics from Austria (91); Switzerland (199); France (162); West Germany (273); and the USA (211). It indicated that Austria was the strongest bastion of Keynesianism in the West.

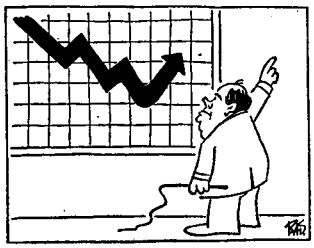
Seven out of ten Austrian economists support a Keynesian view of budgets and deficits. Some of the other results: Swiss 65%, 51% of the Americans, 50% of the West Germans.

The strongest reason for the decline in the credibility of Keynesian economics was the experiences of the 1970s, years of growing unemployment and grievous debts and deficits. In general there would appear to be a decline in confidence in the effectiveness of governmental interventions. For example, in West Germany only 3 in 10 economists (31%) are still persuaded that fiscal controls in a time of under-employment can work well against prevailing negative trends in the labour market. We Austrians, however, are still of the faith: one in two (52%) believe that recessions can be dealt with by state fiscal policies. Nevertheless, they do reject (43%) the concomitant of such policies: namely, higher taxes.

The authors of the inquiry concluded that, in contrast to American, Swiss and German economists, the dominant Austrian school of theory and expertise—together with the French—looks with decidedly less favour on free-market factors and competition. It is remarkable that the general tendencies of each of the various countries seem to run roughly parallel with the ideas of the national experts in economics.

WIENER ZEITUNG (*Vienna*)

The Inefficient Market



IT IS, ADMITTEDLY, difficult to imagine a liberal democracy functioning well in the absence of a sizeable private enterprise sector which—as Hayek and Friedman have persuasively argued—also acts as a counterweight to the economic power of the state. Yet those who repose their hopes for a better life in an expansion of the free enterprise economy are, I am afraid, destined to be disillusioned. No sober assessment of its prospects in terms of efficiency alone—ignoring, for the present, any consideration bearing on the quality of life—can encourage such hopes.

First, the unbridled operation of the market, whether more competitive or less, cannot be shown to promote social justice in any acceptable sense. And there are no grounds whatever for expectations that, in the absence of sustained state intervention, it will tend to produce a more egalitarian distribution of income.

Secondly, only in a hypothetical market economy—one in which (among other things) wages and prices were highly flexible—would there be a tendency toward "Full Employment"—in the sense that all those seeking specific forms of employment at prevailing market rates of remuneration would be able to find such employment without delay. Since there is no likelihood that this condition will ever be realised in an actual economy, the unaided mechanisms of the market cannot ensure high levels of employment. Monetary, fiscal, and other economic policies will always be required.

Thirdly, and last, although a market economy is undoubtedly superior to a centrally planned economy in respect of consumer innovation, individual choice, and resource allocation, such advantages need to be qualified with the passage of time and with the transition to a high technology society.

IN RESPECT OF individual choice and resource allocation, the Market is apt to be more successful at lower levels of technology and with smaller production units. Much may be said in its favour for "the state of the art" that existed in Britain during the 18th century. More might have been said in its favour during the first half of the 19th century if the government had intervened to the extent at least of regulating hours and conditions of work and prohibiting the employment of children in coal mines and in "the dark satanic mills". Moreover, although the living standards of the labouring classes as a whole improved over the century, albeit erratically, and continued to do so during the 20th century, the incidental exclusion of heavy social costs—the damage inflicted on the health and welfare of workers and townspeople by smoke, stench, filth, and effluent, and by occupational diseases—from the market prices of finished goods

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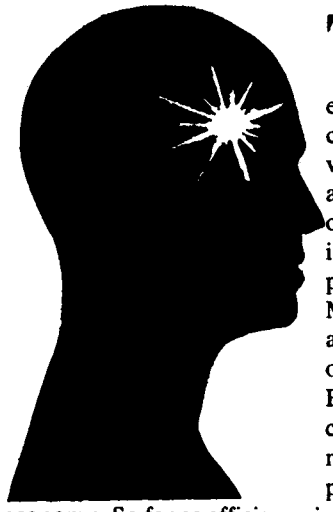
tended to produce a misallocation of resources which took the form of a general over-production of manufactured goods along with a concomitant destruction of environmental goods and much avoidable pain and suffering.

From the 1950s on, the informed public has become aware of the diffusion locally and globally of a widening range of hazardous spillover effects generated by modern industry and agribusiness. Economists may habitually affirm that, in respect of market goods, individual choice has been increasing. In respect of non-market goods, in contrast, it continues to diminish. Each one of us today unwittingly and involuntarily imbibes a growing number of potentially poisonous substances and is subjected, therefore, to a variety of health risks. The adequacy or otherwise of the resulting allocation of resources in these circumstances is highly speculative.

The one minor economic virtue that may still be attributed to the free-enterprise sector of the economy is that prices tend to be set as to clear markets, so avoiding prolonged surpluses and shortages. The adjective "prolonged" is not otiose in this connection. For short periods of several years, demand for services, intensified by growing affluence and by advertising, frequently overreaches capacity, even where (or especially where) newly-installed computers replace personnel. Queues at supermarket check-out counters, at banks, at post offices and government offices generally, continue to grow. Tourist promotion has resulted in overcrowded airports, longer baggage waits, and, during summer months, endless miles of crawling traffic and near-unmanageable crowds at rail and bus stations at European city centres.

More or Less?



THE BROAD CONCLUSION of this short survey is that although no economist goes so far as to consider a competitive private enterprise system to be a panacea for all social disorders, many have been overimpressed by its economic and political virtues. To be sure the Market is an impersonal mechanism. It cannot be accused of prejudice or discrimination. But its neutrality is such that it can also serve a slave economy (and has done so) as impartially as it can serve a free economy. So far as efficiency is at issue, it can work as well or better under a politically repressive régime as under a liberal democratic system. Neither is there any lack of instances today to confirm the fact that a well-functioning market has no built-in tendency to promote excellence. It offers no resistance whatever to wanton commercialism and tasteless vulgarity. With the help of the mass media we are learning to live in a four-letter world.

It would be a foolish government that would put much trust in so indiscriminate an institution for raising the quality of life, the more so in a high-technology civilisation that is increasingly prone to risk and instability. Only policies designed to remove particular sources of nuisance or grievance can bring relief to the many harassed citizens of the super-consumer society, and only policies designed to create specific forms of amenity can add to their felicity.

One can say more. For it is naive, if not escapist, to believe that economic factors of themselves can bring society closer to the promised land or, at any rate, a green and pleasant one. Notwithstanding decades of official and editorial exhortation to the nation to work harder, to export more, to invest more, to spend more on research and training, and many other such imperious notes from the same bugle—all of which, it is understood, will enable us to grow faster so as to be able to consume more and yet export more, invest more, spend more on research and training, and so on—it is no longer possible to believe that the achievement of ever higher norms of productivity will do anything more than make modern life more frantic, complex, and wearing.

Technocratic assertions that with the spread of yet more powerful computers and, therefore, readier access to massive amounts of information on every conceivable subject, the many social problems spawned by post-War technologies will eventually be reduced to manageable dimensions are implausible. Thanks to revolutionary methods of research, we already know infinitely more about every aspect of the modern city than did our forebears. There is, practically speaking, nothing that we do not know today about our cities—except how to make them quiet, clean, safe, and beautiful.

TO CONCLUDE, then, it is not what a competitive market can do, or what economic progress can do, that gives cause for disquiet. What causes concern is the insistent reliance on either, or both, for what they cannot reasonably be expected to do; namely, to make life more wholesome and satisfying—when it is at least as likely that, in the absence of wise direction and strong control, they will make it less.

Epilogue

A CREDIBLE ANSWER to the question why interest in private enterprise and competitive markets has burgeoned over the last two or three decades is not hard to find. Although economists in particular have long nourished a predilection in favour of market solutions on grounds of efficiency and personal freedom, one that was strengthened by the experience of "socialist planning" by Labour governments in Britain since 1945, the renewed emphasis on its economic advantages grew along with the rise to public favour of the monetarist doctrines espoused by Milton Friedman and other members of the Chicago School of economics. For monetarism of this sort entails a policy of minimal government control and is, therefore, not only of a

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piece with the classic rationale of the Market but also a pre-condition of its effective operation.

Monetarism itself, however, came into vogue as a reaction to the apparent failure of "fine-tuned" fiscal policies (wrongly associated with Keynes's *General Theory*) and so-called Income Policies in preventing the rise of inflation rates to dangerous proportions in the 1970s. It was inevitable, therefore, that the initial triumph of Monetarism in Conservative circles should be supplemented by pro-Market doctrines.

A more engrossing question, however, is why public concern with economic issues should have continued to be so all-absorbing—why, at a time of unprecedented material prosperity, the policies of the different political parties have continued since World War II to be predominantly economic. Since real living standards (as measured by conventional indices) have more than doubled in all Western countries over the last 30 years or so, the concern of people with material goods should—according to elementary economic theory—have diminished.

There can be a number of explanations for this paradoxical development. I have myself advanced tentative hypotheses turning on the products of scientific advance and the "new permissiveness" it has been instrumental in promoting. But whatever the causes of our diurnal and abiding obsession with economic matters, it assuredly and unfortunately serves to conceal the increasing vulnerability of the affluent liberal-democratic society, a vulnerability which our statesmen cannot bring themselves to acknowledge—perhaps because it would seem beyond their powers to deal with.

Yet in all conscience our political establishment cannot go on talking and acting as if each nation's top priority is to foster progress toward a hyper-consumer civilisation—on the tacit premise that a never-ending expansion of economic and hedonic opportunity will suffice to overlay a growing spiritual void that is the culmination of 500 years of science and secularisation.

An expanding and restless population of highly mobile, highly motivated, self-seeking individuals cannot be held together as a nation simply by economic policies alone, whether successful or not. It is still less likely that the inhabitants of this or of any other Western country can continue to constitute a free self-governing people without pride in their common history, without esteem for their institutions, without respect for their political leaders, without a moral consensus, and without faith or purpose.

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John Mole's most recent volume of poems, *In and Out of the Apple*, was published in 1984 by Secker & Warburg, who early next spring will bring out his new collection, *Homing*.

E. J. Mishan has been Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics and Visiting Professor at various universities in Canada and the USA. His many books include *The Costs of Economic Growth* (1967), *Introduction to Normative Economics* (Oxford University Press, 1981), and *Introduction to Political Economy* (Hutchinson, 1982). Among his contributions to ENCOUNTER are "New Footnote to an Old Argument" (December 1985) and "Was the Women's Liberation Movement Really Necessary?" (January 1985).

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LETTERS

Maligning Sakharov

THERE MAY BE varying viewpoints about the character of the Soviet co-Nobel Prize Winner, the co-chairman (with an American doctor, Bernard Lown) of yet another International Committee against nuclear horrors. But we know that Dr Yevgeny Chazov was held in high esteem by Brezhnev (a "good friend" and loyal comrade in the highest Party circles); and that no less a person than Andropov hailed the Doctors Committee's activities in 1983 as "identical with the ideas and feelings of the Soviet leadership. . . ." But one special virtue of the man has not yet been noted. He knows things in advance . . . he divines the shape of things to come.

It all came out in Stockholm. After the Nobel Prize ceremony, the foreign correspondents put sharp questions to Dr Chazov, especially about his "uncollegial" attitude toward a fellow Russian scientist, Dr Alexei Sakharov, when he added his name to an official Moscow denunciation of the world-famous physicist and human-rights dissident. Chazov defended himself by citing a Sakharov statement approving the American *MX* missile; whereas he was for the reduction of nuclear weapons. Sakharov had said this in a letter to an American physicist (Dr Sydney Drell).

But sharp-eyed as he may well be, Dr Chazov overlooked one little thing. The letter to Drell dates from 1983, and it was published in summer of that year in the American magazine *Foreign Affairs*. But the denunciatory letter against Sakharov was drafted in Moscow and launched in the year 1973. Did the good doctor know so far in advance what Sakharov would be saying ten years later?

IN ANY EVENT, in that letter Sakharov was actually arguing for a reduction of weapons, if not their abolition—since that might lead to a tilted balance-of-power in favour of Kremlin totalitarianism. He made it quite clear that if the expense of a few billions had to be undertaken by the USA in order to counterbalance Soviet superiority in missiles, then he for one had to support it.

Evidently Dr Chazov's clairvoyance calls only for him to "see things clearly", not to read things carefully.

Still, I wonder. Given the bias of the total controllers of opinion in the East, and the bias of so many in the West (going along in their TV "documentaries" with the "ideas and feelings" of Chazov-Lown quite voluntarily, quite unbribed), one would suspect that the Sakharov side of the case will get less and less of a fair hearing. When the *Foreign Affairs* article appeared it will be recalled that no less a commentator than Anthony Lewis, writing in *The New York Times*, accused Dr Sakharov of no less a crime than "McCarthyism"!

Here is another case of somebody not reading very carefully. The passage in question was important, and bears (in my view) rereading and further reflection. I cite the following from Sakharov's article, "The Danger of Thermonuclear War", in the Summer 1983 number of *Foreign Affairs* (p. 1011):

> ". . . What is necessary now, I believe, is the enormous practical task of education so that specific, exact, and historically and meaningful objective information can be made available to all people, information that will enjoy their trust and not be viewed with dogma and propaganda. Here one must take into account that, in the countries of the West, pro-Soviet propaganda has been conducted for quite a long time and is very goal-oriented and clever, and that pro-Soviet elements have penetrated many key positions, particularly in the mass media."

This was a courageous warning to the West to be wary of what the "clever" Soviet manipulators call *dizinformatsia.*

MAY I ADD a number of small points about the "VIth International Conference of Doctors against Atomic War" which has just been held here in Germany?

1. One heard, as usual, much about the perils of nuclear radiation, nuclear arms, etc. The American co-President, Dr Lown, thundered against "the Arms Race", and associated the name of his Soviet co-President, Dr Chasov, with his very general, very vague, and ultimately very one-sided demands. It reminded me of the old joke about the American who, boasting of his freedom, said he could at any time stand in front of the White House and cry, "Down with the Men Who Did Hiroshima!" The Russian boasted of his freedom to do exactly the same. . . .

2. Still, despite the obvious efforts of Soviet politicians to imitate Western "safety-valves" (cf. the pop concert in Moscow to aid the Chernobyl victims), there is no sign of a protest movement against "the men who gave us Chernobyl." According to a report from Moscow by the Editor of *The Sunday Times* (London, 1 June):

> "At dinner on our first night in a mausoleum of a restaurant, a Western correspondent assured us that 'this is not a police state'. Two days later journalists and diplomats waited in vain in a city-centre square for a demonstration against nuclear power to materialise. It didn't because the *KGB* managed to arrest all the putative protesters before they left their homes. . . ."

At the Cologne conference we waited for Dr Lown and Dr Chasov to call—in our relative "bourgeois freedom"—for some indignant protest against a Soviet embassy, at least a petition with a million or a thousand or a hundred signatures. In vain.

3. As for the Hippocratic idealism of the doctors assembled, one is sure that they mean well and want to do well; still, there was no news when the Chernobyl catastrophe occurred of this splendid committee of medical care and concern sending a team or even one specialist to help treat the thousands who were seriously ill in the Soviet area from nuclear radiation. Only months later, when the Kremlin gave the signal for frank disclosure, were they heard from. Where care is not individual and morality not a very personal commitment, concern tends to become an ideological exercise in longdistance communication. Propaganda of the word, not even "propaganda of the deed."

FINALLY, just to suggest how far we are from understanding these propaganda techniques, let me mention that messages to the Cologne affair were sent by most of our leading West German politicians, including the leading liberals, ex-SPD-Chancellor Willy Brandt as well as (surprisingly enough) the West German President, Richard Weizsäcker.

Whom the gods would destroy, they first make . . . dupes.

ERNST V. STERN

Cologne

Houdini's Death

MELVIN J. LASKY's "Polish Notebook" [ENCOUNTER, July/August 1986] quotes a Polish intellectual who uses the death of Harry Houdini as a metaphor for the powerlessness of the Jaruzelski régime. Although the metaphor is apt, its description of Houdini's death is, unfortunately, wrong. Houdini died of a ruptured appendix, not during one of his legendary underwater escapes. It may be, however, that this is an even more apt metaphor for the current régime in Poland. Only time will tell.

STEVE COLLINS

Exeter

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Age & Insight

PETER COLLIER and David Horowitz did produce an impressive document [ENCOUNTER, September-October 1985]; yet I was struck by their early self-justification with that banality about "Anyone under 40 who isn't a socialist has no heart—anyone over 40 who is a socialist has no brain." The point simply won't wash.

Anyone who has common sense should know that the heart of the socialist is on his sleeve: no socialist policy has ever enhanced a human life without making some other miserable. But the righteousness of the socialist—concerning his or her good intentions—is, of course, unmatched. Perhaps this unabashed gall about how moral they all are—just witness the Hollywood "political pilgrims" now emoting about Nicaragua's marvellous "new revolutionary government" that will, this time for sure, do "the right thing for the people"—has managed to bamboozle the likes of Collier and Horowitz. But those of us who from childhood to maturity have been exposed and subjected to the actual policies of socialists are not buying any of it.

The fact is that Collier and Horowitz were largely wrong then, as were all their pals, about their political ideals. Why not simply admit that too rather than go with this nonsense about age making the difference.

TIBOR R. MACHAN

Lugano
Switzerland

The "German Question", Yet Again

Dr Adenauer's Role—By GOLO MANN

THERE IS, I am afraid, always "the German Question", and questions about it can be counted on to recur periodically. The famous "Stalin Note" comes to be "reconsidered" every ten or twenty years, as does the *Reichstag* Fire; and much gets to be written about it in the press and periodicals, although actually nothing truly remains to be said about either subject. In my view nothing very essentially new has been uncovered by recent researchers or their commentators.[1]

I confronted in April 1966 *Bundeskanzler* Dr Adenauer with the question: "Suppose that a reunified and neutralised Germany were possible, would you have wished it to come about?" The answer was: "No, never." That is to say: Never again a second Weimar Republic, terribly crippled, with the capital Berlin so near to the eastern frontier of the *Reich*; with a German Communist Party incomparably stronger (in all probability) than in the 1920s; with a national community internally divided and torn, and externally without a foreign-policy compass and confused by Eastern and Western temptations, but more and more caught up in Russian pressures, for the USSR was near and the USA far away. . . . No, the experienced old man who was elected and re-elected Chancellor by the West German people didn't have *that* much civic confidence in his fellow-citizens. . . .

Naturally he wished for a unified Germany; but under conditions which could never be had in those circumstances. The Russians would never have been tempted to give up their "*Zone*", bought with so much blood, just so that it could proceed to add itself to the Western alliance.

NOR IS THIS ALL. The Russians would never have given up their zone of power and influence, called since 1949 the DDR, the East German Democratic Republic. By 1952, the year of the so-called "Stalin Note", the Bolshevisation process had even there gone so far as to cause, in the event of a basic reorientation, the most dangerous upsets in the other countries of the Eastern Bloc, in Poland for example. The "Brezhnev Doctrine", according to which anybody who was once a member of Lenin's church belonged there forever, existed long before Chairman Brezhnev; and for a very good reason. The network has been spun against the will of the people, and it always runs the risk of ripping and running when the slightest tear in the net occurs. One experienced this in Berlin, in the year after the Stalin Note; and three years later the Budapest Uprising of October 1956 was incomparably more intense than the East German 17th of June 1953.

It is, in my view, an error on the part of historians to come along with some little document, or a report of a conversation as heard (or overheard) by second and third parties, and to convince themselves that they can therewith come to new grips with so serious a problem as the division of Germany and of Europe. The lines were, in all truth, already discernible at the beginning of the War; and only some kind of permanent benign understanding among the Great Powers could have prevented them from being drastically drawn. After all the "Alliance of the Allies", east and west, died on the day Hitler perished in his Berlin bunker.

Dr Konrad Adenauer had a cool and sharp feeling for such things, and he had recognised the basic situation as early as autumn 1945 (as Occupation-time Mayor of Cologne, about to be "deposed" by the British); and he drew his own conclusions. This doesn't mean that he had, or could have had, the slightest influence on events as they were developing. Who was he, then, after all? But this also does not mean that he was overjoyed at what took place.

Günter Grass has recently told us that the division of post-War Germany was the fault of "the Stalinist Walter Ulbricht" and the "Rhineland separatist Adenauer". This, it seems to me, is the kind of remark which represents a grievous abuse of the fame which Grass has won in quite a different field. Who should have Stalin sent to Berlin in 1945 but a Stalinist, whether he was called Ulbricht or by any other name?

As for Adenauer being some kind of "*Rheinischer Separatist*", this is a demonstrable historical untruth. What for a time he was trying to do in the period after World War I was to establish a *Land*, a province, within the German *Reich*, rather like the *Land* of Nordrhein-Westfalen today. It was intended to function as a kind of bridge between Germany and France, pretty much in the spirit of his newly-established University of Cologne. One should read the speech which he made on that occasion. It is all part of the rather formidable logic of his long political career.

A COEXISTENCE in friendship between France and Germany was always one of his central ideals; to be sure, between the French and *all* the Germans. That not all of the Germans, *all* of the old Germany, could be involved in the new European framework he favoured was not something that he could be faulted for. It was the consequence of historic forces and powers far greater than he.

GOLO MANN

Kilchberg am Zürichsee
Switzerland

[1] See, in ENCOUNTER, Anthony Glees, "Churchill's Last Gambit" (April 1985), Sir Frank Roberts, "Churchill Gambit & the German Checkmate" (September-October 1985); and recent controversies in *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), and *Die Welt* (Bonn).

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Greek Linguistics

I DON'T WANT to get involved in an argument with my friend Gordon Messing [Letters, July/August] about the definition of "syntax". Perhaps he would prefer "the way in which units of meaning are combined together", which is not very different from my admittedly broad interpretation of the word. We agree on the substance of my letter, which aimed to warn your readers against swallowing John Carr's article on the Greek language whole ("Greek to You", ENCOUNTER, January).

The period since 1974 has probably been the first time in the history of Greek that there has been a single version of the language available for all purposes, colloquial, literary, and official. After millennia of alternative versions, it is no wonder that there are still a few linguistic areas where different speakers prefer to use slightly different forms.

I agree with Professor Messing that there is often a correlation between party allegiance and choice between linguistic options in Greece; but he fails to specify the consequences (desirable or otherwise) of this phenomenon. I am convinced, however, that this situation is the symptom of a passing phase, and anyone who has followed the development of spoken and written Greek in the last twelve years will have been impressed by the alacrity with which increasing numbers of Greeks of "conservative" speech have willingly adapted their usage to the more regular and less stuffy norms that are promoted in schools today—and have, after all, been used systematically in literature for over a century.

PETER MACKRIDGE

St Cross College
Oxford

Manipulating Life & Death

ROY KERRIDGE, in his horrifying "Death of a Child" [ENCOUNTER, June], criticises the "training" and the pseudo-scholarly ideology of social workers. My observation of social workers in the United States suggests that Mr Kerridge was, if anything, not critical enough.

Several years ago, for example, I worked temporarily in a public university where social-work students were given "competencies", not grades, and called "advocates", not social workers. Most of them were nearly or functionally illiterate, despite being certified as "competent" in reading. They were, nevertheless, convinced of their superiority to their future charges and their right, even duty, to manipulate their relatively defenceless charges' lives. They were predictably all very far to the Left politically, although theirs was a very reactionary and inarticulate Leftism.

Judging from observation of my contemporaries, this phenomenon helps explain the movement of many young adults to the Right. Neo-conservatism is an expression of fear. Fear, that is, of a state that does not recognise any limitations to its power and of a political rhetoric—or ideology—which describes every normal human aspiration as a moral failing, which the state has by implication a duty to ignore or if possible eliminate. The normal parental desire to send a child to school in his neighbourhood and with his friends was described ten years ago as "racism", and the child bussed, perhaps a great distance, to achieve someone else's somewhat abstract goal of "racial equality". The natural response of young adults to the increasingly obvious dangers to their freedom of the unlimited state has been to desire its limitation.

This phenomenon also helps to explain what is often derided as their acquisitiveness. As Chesterton and Belloc recognised years ago, wealth is the only real protection against a state convinced of its right to remake its subjects—though wealth provides only limited protection. Parents have lost control of many public school systems, for example, leaving them the choice of subjecting their children to people whose ideas are frequently objectionable or sending their children to private schools, which requires wealth, the acquiring of which is not avarice (as it is caricatured), but concern for those placed within their care.

DAVID PETER MILLS

Ipswich
Massachusetts

Watson's Butterfield

GEORGE WATSON is surely right [ENCOUNTER, January] when, quoting Herbert Butterfield, he insists that "History must always be written from the point of view of the present." But I would suggest that he is wrong to think it "fatal" to Butterfield's own case against the Whig Interpretation of History. Far from being based on a naive positivism ("piling facts higher and higher") or on moral relativism ("the dogmatic demand for context and nothing but"), the reservations Butterfield expressed about it in 1931 were founded on his feeling as an historian that English and European history were both more complicated and more interesting than the Whig tradition represented them to be.

However, historians will not be surprised when Butterfield's cautiously expressed scepticism about the supposed darkness of the Middle Ages, or the commitment to liberty of 16th-century Protestants, is depicted by Mr Watson as a fully-fledged philosophy of history and an absurd (even dangerously immoral) one at that. Writers on historiography—Butterfield excepted of course—have not usually been historians themselves. Such critics, and Mr Watson would seem to be one, prefer to judge historical writing according to whether they approve of the political doctrine they suppose its author to hold. Perhaps this explains why Mr Watson chooses to ignore the volume of research since Butterfield wrote (on, for example, the role of late medieval and early modern parliaments, or the origins of the Civil War) which has largely confirmed his original scepticism about Whig history and instead arrives at the extraordinary verdict trumpeted in the subtitle to his essay: "Butterfield's Victory . . . and Defeat".

I agree with him that the coming third centenary of the English Revolution should give us occasion to pause and reflect upon our enjoyment in this country of "civil order and law's rule". However, I feel bound to disagree with his claim that the unedifying tale the historian of these years has to tell of intrigue, rebellion, and foreign invasion "can teach the world how constitutional liberty is progressively gained and preserved." There are still quite likely to be literal-minded people out there who have not read their Butterfield, and so do not understand that "History must always be written from the point of view of the present."

SIMON HEANS

Lancing College
Sussex

THE SUBTITLE "Butterfield's Victory . . . & Defeat" was not mine; but Herbert Butterfield himself, in a passage I quoted, generously and publicly acknowledged that the chief thesis of his *Whig Interpretation of History* (1931) was one which, in the rashness of youth, he had overdrawn. I do not know what view of early parliaments, or of the English Civil War, Mr Heans attributes to the Whigs; only that Macaulay, Acton and G. M. Trevelyan were neither as simple nor as simple-minded as some historians since the 1930s have supposed.

GEORGE WATSON

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Life & Letters Today

Manchester

FORESIGHT SAGA: *Manchester author Jim Williams wasn't surprised by the Soviet nuclear power disaster.*

He had already written about it in a book to be published soon—just as he wrote fictionally about the forged Hitler diaries a year before it all really happened.

Williams, 38, who writes as Richard Hugo, says: "It's a question of logic and planning. Thinking through a plot for a disaster novel, I decided a leak in a nuclear power plant would be the most dramatic, and more likely to occur in Russia than in America or this country. Now I've been proved right."

Williams's first book, "The Hitler Diaries", was published in 1982 after four years of meticulous research. Less than a year after it came out, the literary world was astonished when the real-life Hitler "diaries" affair uncannily paralleled the twists and turns of his thriller.

He had just delivered the manuscript of his latest thriller "Farewell Russia", to his publisher, Macmillan, when the news broke about the real-life nuclear disaster.

DAILY MAIL

Berlin

"BRITISCH": **In a surprise upset, 16-year-old German starlet Steffi Graf defeated world-champion Martina Navratilova to win the German international tennis title. Later her father and manager, Peter Graf, who had been subject to much press criticism for his cold and arrogant ways, tried to explain: "I concede that I've made many mistakes in public, and I've much to learn. But I do have a sense of humour, a special kind, and my friends call it 'Britisch'—it's there but doesn't often show, and doesn't always come through as intended. . . ."**

WELT AM SONNTAG

Roanoke, N.C.

CHICKENFEED: *They talk different in North Carolina.*

DARE *[Dictionary of American Regional English] researchers heard about a structure in the tobacco country called a* **"fadebarn."** *Most likely, they decided, it referred to those lovely outbuildings weathered by the sun and the passage of time. But that theory couldn't be verified. So* DARE *took an unusual tack; it got a local newspaper columnist to ask his readers for information.*

They replied in droves, scornfully letting him know that a **"fadebarn"** *is where you "fade" (feed) the animals.*

WALL STREET JOURNAL

London

ROYAL PHRASE: **Prince Charles's memorable phrase describing last year's proposed extension to the National Gallery as "a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much loved friend" was not entirely original, it seems.**

Intriguingly, the Prince appears to have lifted it from a book by his stepmother-in-law, Lady Spencer, who no doubt inherited some of her literary skills from her mother, Barbara Cartland. The phrase appears in Lady Spencer's 1983 book "The Spencers on Spas", in which she movingly writes of the "monstrous carbuncles of concrete" which have "now erupted in gentle Georgian squares." Powerful stuff.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

LITERALLY: *Gamma minus for the new "Oxford Mini Dictionary of Spelling" on which I had been hoping to depend for my own accuracy. The volume contains this erratum slip:* **"For illitterate, read illiterate".** *In newspapers we refer to such errors as literals.*

THE TIMES

London

MAY/SHALL: *One gem of debate in the House of Lords which the television cameras missed but which Hansard faithfully records, occurred the other day during the hearing of amendments to the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Bill.*

Lord Houghton of Sowerby:

> **"My Lords, the difference between '*may*' and '*shall*' is one of the bugbears of the statute law and of parliamentary debate. I do not know how many hours I have spent in both Houses of Parliament debating the difference between '*may*' and '*shall*.' I think we need an Act of Parliament to resolve this difficulty and to declare once and for all that '*may*' means '*shall*' . . . anyway in this case '*may*' has been translated into '*shall*.' Of course we know that it meant '*shall*' all the time but I need not pursue it any further."**

Lord Scarman:

> **"My Lords, I should like to say this to the noble lord. If the word '*shall*' is used, the judges will interpret it as '*may*.' If the word '*may*' is used, the judges will interpret it as '*shall*.'"**

HANSARD

London

JOB DESCRIPTION: *The "Plain English Campaign" clearly hasn't made any impact in Richmond. According to an official document the Council there is considering "the adoption of an initiative to promote customer orientated management leading to the greater use of consumer views and reactions in service management."*

To put it another way, it's mulling over the appointment of a market researcher.

LONDON STANDARD

Manila

POLICE STATE: **"You can't disassociate films from politics", the Philippines' leading director, Lino Brocka, said after last month's election.**

The Film Academy of the Philippines has now voted to send the once-banned "Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim" ("My Country in Desperate Straits") to be the official Philippine entry in this year's Academy Awards.

Out of necessity Brocka can be an unorthodox filmmaker. During the shooting of "Bayan Ko" he was participating during the day in a protest march controlled by City Police, while at night he shot his film and used the same policemen as actors.

"The Chief of Police moonlights as an actor", Brocka said. "It's expensive to dress an actor as a police officer. You need uniforms, guns, cars. If you hire a policeman, he already has them."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

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VARYING • SOCIETIES

Oglala Women

Myth, Ritual, and Reality
MARLA N. POWERS
Foreword by
Catharine R. Stimpson
In this fascinating book, Powers reveals the reasons—cultural, emotional, and political—why Oglala women foster the illusion of their being subservient to men while, in reality, the roles of the sexes are equally important in tribal life.
"These moving and powerfully drawn descriptions of Lakota 'Sioux' women...command respect and belief....A give-away star quilt that wraps us all in honor"—Rayna Green, Consultant on American Indian Programs to the Smithsonian Institution/NMAH
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Women in Culture and Society series

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With a new Afterword
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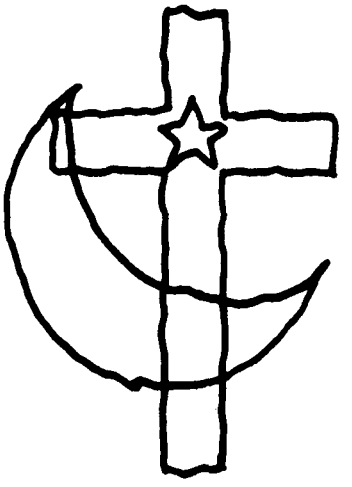
Illustrated



Hegemony and Culture

Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba
DAVID D. LAITIN
Since the early nineteenth century, eighty percent of the Yoruba of Nigeria have converted, in approximately equal numbers, to either Christianity or Islam; yet these sharp religious differences have not caused political division. Laitin explores the reasons for this "unnatural" religious toleration, focusing on the hegemonic role of the nineteenth-century British administration in Yorubaland. Moving between empirical and conceptual levels, he has produced a richly complex work that combines political science, anthropology, sociology, and social theory.

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Sri Lanka

Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy
S.J. TAMBIAH
A native Sri Lankan of Tamil origins, the distinguished social anthropologist S.J. Tambiah analyzes the causes of the conflict between majority Sinhalese Buddhists and minority Tamils that has wracked the island of Sri Lanka for almost forty years. In his view, recent social stresses rather than ancient religious and racial differences are the source of the trouble.
"An excellent and thought-provoking book."—Paul Sieghart, *Los Angeles Times Book Review.*
"Concise, informative, lucidly written....a powerful case for the importance of pluralism."
—Merle Rubin, *Christian Science Monitor*

Religion and Society in Central Africa

The BaKongo of Lower Zaire
WYATT MacGAFFEY
The BaKongo people inhabit a large area of Central Africa, including parts of the Republic of the Congo, Zaire, Cabinda, and Angola. In this systematic study of their religion and culture, MacGaffey shows that the society, despite historical upheavals in the region, has retained its underlying fabric of ritual and cosmology, structure and power. The first of its kind and scope—reaching as far back as the sixteenth century—this work provides an exemplary model of the relationship of cosmological structure to history. Illustrated

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